Football FA Cup third round: Chelsea 3 Manchester United 5

United's gale force flattens Chelsea

David Lacey

THE gale sweeping through Stamford Bridge last Sunday wore the red of Manchester United. Chelsea entered the match as FA Cup holders but long before the end any hopes they might have had of keeping the trophy for another year were gone with the wind.

If the Cup is United's third priority, behind the European Champions League and Premiership, then heaven help their opponents in subsequent rounds if they start to take the thing seriously. Chelsea were out-tackled, outpassed, outmanoeuvred and outrun; simply blown away.

"These may be our priorities," said Alex Ferguson, United's manager, after the game, "but when you're at Chelsea in the third round of the Cup it generates a sense of anticipation among the players. You find their true character, they want to win, and they certainly wanted to win today."

The result belied the plot. True, Chelsea scored three times in the last 11 minutes but by then they were five down and their grip on the Cup had become arthritic.

Essentially they were undone by the mixture of power, pace and good technique that United have produced in midfield for much of the season. This time Nicky Butt was United's outstanding player, with Ryan Giggs not far behind and Paul Scholes as consistent an influence as ever.

Andy Cole's emergence as a central striker with poise and confidence continues apace. His two goals last Sunday have made him the Premiership's leading scorer with 19, one more than West Ham's John Hartson.

To some extent United were aided by Chelsea's bizarre approach. Lacking the suspended Dennis Wise, Ruud Gullit tried to shore up his midfield by playing Mark Hughes deep in the hope that the former United man's tenacity would disturb Butt and Scholes. It did not work.

By half-time Hughes, cautioned for a late challenge on Beckham after 19 minutes, might well have added a red card to his New Year's MBE. Gullit played him up front in the second half but, until Gianluca Vialli replaced the ineffective Tore Andre Flo for the last 30 minutes, Chelsea did not seriously function as an attacking force.

The absence of Wise could not fully explain Chelsea's failure to recapture the quality of passing and movement which before Christmas were beginning to mark them out as United's most serious Premiership rivals. In September they had come within four minutes of winning at Old Trafford.

Afterwards Gullit rightly pointed out that there was more to winning than mere tactics. "Too many of our players were below their best and we gave away sloppy goals," he said.

Yet he could not offer a satisfactory explanation for not starting with Vialli. "If I had known how he would perform maybe he would have started the game," he said. "I'm glad he showed me I was wrong not to play him." Wrong not to bring Vialli on earlier, too.



Sheringham (centre) is congratulated for his goal PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

Overall Chelsea had played better in losing the 1994 FA Cup final 4-0 to United. Then at least they had had the better of the game before half-time before being undone by two penalties from Eric Cantona.

At Stamford Bridge they pressed forward for 10 minutes then disappeared for the next hour. Scholes dragged a simple chance wide in the 15th minute but, once Butt had shown he could take whatever Hughes might offer, the match, as a contest, was over.

After 22 minutes Cole set up the opening goal with a short cross which Teddy Sheringham nodded down for David Beckham to score.

Six minutes later Beckham's free-kick skidded past Ed De Goey at the near post and on the stroke of half-time Giggs sent Cole on a 50-yard sprint, at the end of which he outpaced Frank Leboeuf to add a third.

In the 65th minute Butt again won the ball and gave Giggs the chance to send Cole between Duberry and Leboeuf for United's fourth. In the 74th Sheringham met Beckham's cross with a clearly headed fifth.

Then Graeme Le Saux, who had hit the bar earlier, lobbed an advancing Peter Schmeichel and Vialli twice exploited United defending which assumed it was all over. Ferguson hoped Chelsea's late flourish would concentrate minds for the champions' return to Stamford Bridge next month.

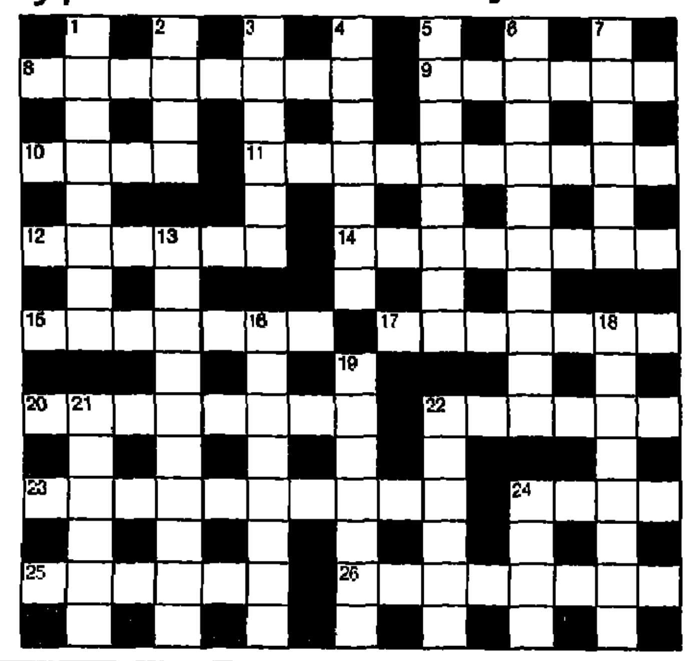
Surely Gullit's team cannot play as badly again. On this performance they went out in the third round only because they were not required to appear in the first.

● Stevenage Borough's latest giant-killing act — they beat First Division Swindon Town 2-1 — took them into the fourth round of the FA Cup for the first time in the club's history, but it has left the chairman Vince Green facing something of a dilemma.

The Hertfordshire heroes have landed a home tie with Newcastle United next. Stevenage Stadium (cap 6,500) or St James' Park (36,100)? That is the question. The answer, said Green, lies with the police, mainly for safety reasons.

Last year Stevenage drew Birmingham at home, switched the match to St Andrews and cashed in on a 15,000 crowd. Realism is likely to outweigh romance again and the club may use their switch card again. The move will net the cash-hungry non-leaguers $500,000.

Cryptic crossword by Rufus



Across

8 Refuse to reduce the volume (4,4)
9 Old man may be a tough nut to crack (6)
10 Eastern country without a prominent feature (4)
11 Ideal material for a Norfolk jacket? (10)
12 Sturdy flower, first of the year (6)
14 Evidence that the deal is not ideal (8)
15 Hang around with chap from African country (7)
17 About to be given beans? Push off (7)
20 Many were awoken when people had a drunken party (8)
22 Car's crashed by a learner — a culpable character (6)
23 Business advertisement on TV (10)
24 Form of wordless language? (4)
25 Where we can get drinks and a bill for wine (6)
26 There's to-do, then, about being punctual (2,3,3)

Down

1 Bird takes fruit over the door (8)
2 A new number to be put up shortly (4)
3 City where ammunition is stored, say (6)
4 Opens an eye? (7)
5 Generous applause goes to a few (8)
6 Yet revellers often have a great time in them (5,5)
7 Introduce gradually in new list (6)
13 Not a Free Church member, apparently (10)
16 Withdraw a summary (8)
18 Mean to become a candidate (5,3)
19 Poet and MP is an odd combination (7)
21 I heard a statement (6)
22 Tell king to cheer up (6)
24 Soundly thrash, using a crop (4)

Last week's solution

T	R	A	F	F	I	C		R	A	F	F	I	S	H
O		G		L		O		O		I		N		A
B	R	A	D	A	W	L		B	O	D	Y	F	A	T
Y		I		K		E		I		D		I		T
J	E	N	N	Y	W	R	E	N		L	O	D	G	E
U		S				I				E		E		R
G	A	T	E	S		D	U	M	B	B	E	L	L	S
				A		G		U		O				
L	A	K	E	P	O	E	T	S		W	O	R	D	S
O		E		P				I				U		O
W	O	R	T	H		S	U	C	C	E	S	F	O	U
M		A		I		O		H		I		F		T
A	P	T	E	R	A	L		A	N	G	U	I	S	H
S		I		E		V		L		H		A		E
S	I	N	E	D	I	E		L	A	T	E	N	C	Y

FA Cup fourth round draw

- Bournemouth or Huddersfield Town v Wimbledon or Wrexham
- Manchester City v West Ham United
- Charlton Athletic v Darlington or Wolverhampton Wanderers
- Stevenage Borough v Newcastle United
- Tottenham Hotspur v Barnsley
- Queens Park Rangers or Middlesbrough v Arsenal or Port Vale
- Coventry City v Derby County
- Leeds United v Grimsby Town
- Watford or Sheffield Wednesday v Blackburn Rovers
- Crystal Palace v Leicester City
- Birmingham City v Stockport County
- Manchester United v Peterborough or Walsall
- Bristol Rovers or Ipswich Town v Sheffield United or Bury
- Cardiff City v Cheltenham Town or Reading
- Portsmouth or Aston Villa v West Bromwich Albion or Stoke City
- Hereford United or Tranmere Rovers v Sunderland

Matches to be played weekend of January [illegible]

Football results

FA CUP third round: Arsenal 0, Port Vale 0; Barnsley 1, Bolton 0; Blackburn 4, Wigan 2; Bournemth P, Huddersfld P, Bristol R 1, Ipswich 1; Cardiff 1, Oldham 0; Charlton 4, Nottm For 1; Chelsea 3, Man Utd 5, Cheltnham P, Reading P; Crewe 1, Birminghm 2; Crystal Pal 2, Sc'thorpe 0; Darlington P, Wolves P; Derby Co 2, Southmptn 0, Everton 0, Newcastle 1, Grimsby 3, Norwich 0; Hereford P, Tranmere P, Leeds 4, Oxford 0, Leicester 4, Northmptn 0, Liverpool 1, Coventry 3; Man City 2, Bradford 0; Peterboro P, Walsall P; Portsmth 2, Aston Villa 2; Preston 1, Stockport 2; QPR 2, Middlesbro 2; Rotherham 1, Sunderlnd 5; Sheff Utd 1, Bury 1; Swindon 1, Stevenage 2, Tottenham 3, Fulham 1; Watford 1, Sheff Wed 1; WBA P, Stoke P; West Ham 2, Emley 1, Wimbledon 0, Wrexham 0.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Division Two: Blackpool P, Bristol City P; Chesterfld 0, Brentford 0; Gillingham 2, Burnley 0; Southend 1, Luton 2.

Division Three: Colchester 1, Hartlepool 2; Exeter P, Barnet P; Macclesfld P, Brighton P; Mansfield 3, Rochdale 0; Notts Co P, Hull C P; Scarboro P, Torquay Utd P; Shrewsbry P Lincoln P.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 1, Dundee Utd 0; Celtic 2, Rangers 0; Dunfermline 0, St Johnstone 1; Hearts 2 Hibernian 2; Kilmarnk 4, Motherwell 1

First Division: Airdrie P, Partick P; Dundee 1, Raith 1; Hamilton P, Ayr P; Stirling A 0, Falkirk 6; St Mirren P, Morton P.

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP: Second Round: Annan Ath 3, V of Leithen 1; Arbroath P, Queen Sth P; Clydebank P, Montrose P; E Stirling P, Edinburgh City P; Forfar 1, Albion 2; Invrnss CT 2, Queens Pk 0; Livingston P, Berwick P; Lossiemth 0, Dumbarton 1; Peterhead 0, Alloa 2; Ross Co 3, Brechin 1; Stenhsmr P, Deveronvale P; Stranraer P, Fraserburgh P.

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Muslims unite to challenge Suharto's rule

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

THE challenge to President Suharto's authority widened this week when Indonesia's two main Muslim leaders called on him to relinquish office and supported an announcement by the leading opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri that she was willing to succeed him.

"It is time Suharto stepped down as a prerequisite to overcome the multi-dimensional crisis," said Amien Rais, leader of the Muhammadiyah organisation, which has 20 million followers.

"He should have stepped down a long time ago, we need different people," said Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the moderate Nahdlatul Ulama, which claims a grassroots membership of more than 30 million Muslims. "Thirty years is too long for a country for any leader. Logically he should step down now or . . . in March."

However, the ruling Golkar party said it would nominate General Suharto for a seventh term in presidential elections due to be held in March.

The opposition leaders' comments came as international calls for sweeping reform gathered momentum, after weeks of policy U-turns by Gen Suharto called into question his commitment to the terms of an International Monetary Fund rescue and his ability to steer Indonesia out of its crippling debt crisis.

The United States defence secretary, William Cohen, is among an extraordinary assembly of top US officials in Jakarta to reinforce the telephoned message of concern from President Clinton last week. On Monday Gen Suharto received calls from the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto.

Both Muslim leaders greeted Megawati's announcement last weekend that she was willing to stand for the presidency if no one else was nominated to replace the president. In a fiery speech she attacked the "small dynasty of greedy rulers who alone will benefit from the great assets of our country".

Megawati, aged 50, has no officially recognised party to back her candidacy — which must be proposed by groups in parliament — much less take on the apparatus of power through which Gen Suharto has held together the vast archipelago of 200 million people and more than 300 ethnic groups.

Comment, page 12
Finance, page 19

VANDALS sawed off the head of the Little Mermaid statue on Copenhagen's waterfront last week. Police sent divers into the water in the hope of finding the head. It was finally returned three days later by a hooded man who dropped it off at a television station.

The statue, based on a fairy-tale by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, is visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year. Since the statue was put up in 1913, it has been daubed with paint several times, and also had its head removed once before, in 1964.

Irish peace plan delights Unionists

John Mullin

THE British and Irish prime ministers, Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, injected a sense of urgency into the search for a political settlement in Northern Ireland this week when they unveiled their blueprint for a new way forward.

It was the most significant development in 18 months of political talks, and left Sinn Fein marginalised. The Irish republicans have so far gained little from negotiations, and pressure is likely to build up from hardline elements within the IRA.

The Ulster Unionists, though, were delighted. The British government's paper appears closer to its position than the Framework Document, unveiled three years ago as a basis for negotiation.

The nationalist SDLP seemed to be less happy. But it welcomed the initiative as a basis for discussion, and was keen to push on.

The outline settlement provides for a devolved assembly in Northern Ireland, cross-border bodies with undefined powers, and an intergovernmental council. That would involve representation from Westminster and Dublin, as well as from the assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its functions still have to be thrashed out at talks this week in Belfast.

The joint document, its wording the product of frantic telephone conversations over last weekend between Mr Blair in Tokyo and Mr Ahern in Dublin, is designed to push the participating political parties into full negotiations. Each was expected to deliver its response on Tuesday.

Both governments are desperate to make progress before any further acts of terrorism can derail attempts to find a peaceful solution. They are banking on Sinn Fein remaining inside the negotiations.

On Monday the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, was at pains to stress that it was up to the parties to negotiate around the plan. She refused to get drawn into commenting on parties' interpretation of the document, which runs to 600 words. She hailed the initiative as a breakthrough.

Ms Mowlam said: "We hope it forms the basis for detailed negotiation. In the end, it is what the parties can agree that is what matters."

The Irish foreign minister, David Andrews, said: "This has been a great day. We have produced a road map to a new agreement. The paper is an honest and courageous attempt to describe the structures within which agreement can be reached."

The document embraces the Ulster Unionists' concept of an intergovernmental council, the party's way of ensuring that cross-border bodies are downgraded in terms of importance. The party's leader, David Trimble, said: "There is nothing in this paper which obstructs or constrains the sort of outcome toward which we have been working."

But the war of words on what the document meant was already under way. It is deliberately vague on many areas. John Hume, the SDLP leader, rejected Mr Trimble's assertion that any cross-border bodies would simply be advisory. The SDLP will hold out for executive powers for any such bodies.

Sinn Fein said little. But it is opposed to an assembly and to the intergovernmental council.

Mowlam's triumph, page 8

Saddam bans arms inspectors again

Ian Black

SADDAM HUSSEIN threw down a new challenge to a divided United Nations this week, insisting that UN weapons inspections must stop until a United States official is removed.

In what promises to be a replay of last October's crisis, the Iraqi leader sought to exploit differences on the Security Council to weaken the UN operation and hasten the end of sanctions. Baghdad announced it was ordering a halt from Tuesday to the work of one Unscom (UN special commission) team because its leader, Scott Ritter, was a CIA agent. The US denies the charge.

In a letter to the Security Council, Unscom's chief, Richard Butler, said the team would carry on as normal, but this became impossible after Mr Ritter reported that Iraq had failed to provide the staff needed to allow inspections to take place.

Iraq has long complained of the "imbalance" of the UN teams — Mr Ritter's includes eight other Americans, five Britons, a Russian and an Australian — but the US and Britain insist this is no business of President Saddam's and that staff are chosen for their technical expertise.

In Washington, President Bill Clinton said on Monday: "If they are denied the right to do their job, then I expect the Security Council to take strong and appropriate action."

British diplomats, speaking for both the UK and the European Union, expressed "grave concern" at the new threat.

William Cohen, the US defence secretary, vowed not to reduce the military force in the Gulf until Iraq fully complied with the arms inspections. The British Defence Secretary, George Robertson, told MPs that UK forces would remain on alert.

Neither the US nor Britain has any appetite for military action, since it would not be supported by any other country. Nor would it do anything but play into the Iraqi leader's hands.

The latest row came a week before Mr Butler, an Australian, was due to visit Iraq to solve outstanding issues related to access to such sensitive sites as presidential palaces.

Unscom, the world's most intrusive arms-monitoring operation, was forced on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Sanctions cannot be lifted until the Security Council accepts that Iraqi weapons programmes have been halted.

Meanwhile Western intelligence agency reports accuse Libya of secretly trying to develop weapons of mass destruction with help from Iraqi scientists.

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Vatican's sorry role in recent Cuban history

JONATHAN STEELE correctly notes that it has been the Cuban president, Fidel Castro, rather than the Pope of the day, who has consistently sought to build bridges between Cuba's Catholics and the Vatican (Cuba prepares for a clash of the titans, January 4). The problem for the Vatican has been that the conditions for such a relationship must respect Cuba's independence and sovereignty. With widespread support of the Cuban people, President Castro has ensured no interference by a religious bureaucracy that has too often permitted "freedom" of religion to be accompanied by oppression of, and inequality for, its followers.

The vast majority of Cuban people are well aware of a Church establishment that has — over the course of Cuba's history — sanctioned, if not actively supported, genocide of its indigenous population, an active African slave trade in Havana's marketplace, the exploitation of Cubans under the United States-backed Batista dictatorship, and opposition to the national revolution since 1959.

It is hardly an indictment of the Cuban administration if the Vatican chose to respond to abolition of Church interference in the state by isolating its own members (for example, by refusing Mr Castro's invitation to the Pope to visit Cuba while he was in Latin America in 1979).

It is indeed ironic, but perhaps unsurprising, that recent liberalisations in Cuba have resulted in a growth in adherents of conservative Protestant evangelical denominations, more so than in the Catholic Church: perhaps a factor in the Pope's decision to visit the island. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, the obvious thaw between Havana and the Vatican is certainly welcome, and Pope John Paul II is to be congratulated for taking a major step in improving those relations. He is likely to be far better received in Havana in 1998 than he was in newly liberated Sandinista Managua in 1979 (and, probably, would have been in Havana, had he visited at that time).

Hopefully, he will reiterate his opposition to the evils of the US blockade of Cuba, while acknowledging the achievements of the Cuban revolution. In this post-cold war period, the Pope seems to have greater freedom to acknowledge the failings of capitalist practice and the virtues of socialist ideology. The challenge of his visit to Cuba is whether he will also acknowledge the virtues of socialist practice: in health and housing, education and employment, and the general qualitative indicators of human development which, in many regards, exceed those of "developed" capitalist countries.
Robert Johnson,
Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

YOU report (December 28) that a United States judge has awarded damages of $187 million against the Cuban government for the families of the two men shot down after an illegal flight over Cuban air space in 1996.

Can we assume that Washington paid compensation on a similar scale for the passengers and crew of the Iranian airliner that they shot down a few years ago while it was on a peaceful scheduled flight?
John L Cox,
Teddington, Gloucestershire

Revisionism in the Balkans

THANK you for reminding us about what the wars in Bosnia and Croatia were about — appeasing aggression (No fighting in Bosnia, but it's a lousy peace, January 11). Seven years on and many individuals have been dabbling in the art of historical revisionism, apportioning "equal blame to all ethnic groups". In truth, the war raged and instability in the region continues to this day because of the expansionist aspirations of Belgrade's regime and the West's continued support of it. And it is not just Croatia and Bosnia that suffer, as Karen Coleman points out (Insurgency looms in Kosovo, January 11). Serbian troops there are continuing, unchecked, as they terrorise the majority Albanian population.

First Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, now Kosovo, Vojvodina, Montenegro . . . all the insurrections and instability from 1991 in these regions continues because the West appeases Slobodan Milosevic and his armed cronies, as opposed to using the tactics they use against other tyrants such as Saddam Hussein.
Erica Zlomislic,
Toronto, Canada

PRESIDENT Clinton acknowledged on December 18 that he had been wrong in his "18-month Exit Strategy" prediction that enough of Bosnia's political, economic and social life would be rebuilt by June 1998 to justify withdrawal of American troops. Instead, in his press conference, he called for an open-ended international commitment, stating that "if we pull out before the job is done, Bosnia will fall back into violence, chaos, and ultimately a war every bit as bloody as the one that was stopped".

In my view only the implementation of the following requirements can ensure the success of a strategy to create a self-sustaining Bosnia, ultimately at peace with itself:

☐ Given the persistent depth of animosity and suspicion among Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs and Croats, any moderate rebuilding of trustworthy coexistence will take at least a decade and probably longer. Therefore, all plans concerning Bosnia must be based on a comparable long-haul projection.

☐ To maintain security within Bosnia, a well-armed international police force must be provided on an open-ended basis, with a clear understanding that it will be needed for a very long time. Such a force must be preponderantly European and it would be prudent to invite Russia to participate fully.
David Quentzel,
Englewood, New Jersey, USA

Evasive action on global warming

IT IS perplexing and more than a small cause for concern that major players in the global warming issue need to be alerted to what, in environmental policy, is called the Precautionary Principle (Kyoto fails test on climate crisis, December 14). The United States vice-president, Al Gore, is fully within his rights to question the demonstrative science that points to human impact on global warming. It becomes destructive, however, when he tries to ignore the plethora of evidence supporting the thesis that: a) the globe is warming faster than usual; and b) humans are a significant cause of that warming.

It is in the face of conflicting evidence that society must adhere to the Precautionary Principle, which states that we must proceed as if humans do have an impact until such time as conclusive evidence to the contrary is presented. It is a shame that politicians in both the US and Canada (two of the highest per capita creators of greenhouse gases) are motivated by the politics of ignorance towards basic precautions.
Graham Shuley,
Victoria, BC, Canada

A FEW of your correspondents appear to hold the United States responsible for global warming, and some of their comments are unreliable.

Twenty-five years ago the Club of Rome published the then acceptable report that we would be out of gas and oil today, whereas the known resources are larger than ever, and Britain and others are converting their power plants to gas.

In fact, there is no consensus on global warming. But it is everyone's challenge to reduce pollution, and in this the US has always been in the forefront — note our early use of unleaded fuels, and our environmental laws. The world's container ships alone put out more pollutants than all the motor vehicles in the US.
William P Crosner,
Mt Pleasant, South Carolina, USA

Nothing venture in New Zealand

THE personal is the political. That is the real nature of the political culture commandeered in New Zealand through the palace *putsch* by the "perfumed steamroller", Jenny Shipley, of whom Charlotte Denny writes (Wellington boot on an iron foot, December 14). The new prime minister simply intends to continue the stubborn ideological drive of our recent governments. Their members come by and large from generations of a state that was perhaps overprotective and stuffy, but one that tried to give most children basic opportunities and to protect most citizens from the worst risks inevitable in living.

So many of our politicians seem to need to display a sort of adult independence by exposing the rest of us, the citizens who put them into office, to increasing risk. In particularly distasteful cases, some seem now downright vindictive and punitive towards those not willing or able to embrace the ideology, to compete, to assert their individual choice, or whatever. During the recent farcical referendum on state superannuation, for example, some aggressively self-sufficient-individual-in-office flatly declared that we must all learn to "manage risk". Why should I be forced to regard one of the great inevitabilities as a personal "risk" to be "managed"? And who knows what risks they are forcing on the present generations of children with the relentless restructuring of our national community?

However, our new PM and her cohort seem distinctly "risk-averse" in one respect, as they smartly secured their own socio-economic status recently — by voting themselves more money. Voters may well remember that next time the "steamroller" and friends have to risk that status — at election time.
Stan Jones,
Hamilton, New Zealand

Briefly

IN YOUR editorial (December 26) you rightly emphasise that "the hungry child should be fed", as a moral responsibility and a universal human need. You review, with thoroughness and detail, the tragedies of deprived children and mothers in developing and developed countries. However, I was amazed that you did not spare a word for the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children who are being murdered by the brutal sanctions imposed on Iraq by the callous policies of the United States supported by Britain.
(Dr) Ismail Zayid,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

ALTHOUGH the statistics are incompletely presented they show clearly that one-third of the male population of Washington DC lives more than a dozen years longer on average than the other two-thirds (December 14). To say that this is because the larger group (black males) smoke more and use condoms less is an unfounded racist conclusion. Violence accounts for 90 per cent of the discrepancy. There is the direct violence from guns, but more importantly there is the endemic violence of a racist United States society that imposes poverty and lack of hope on a large segment of the population.
Tom Frantz,
St Mary, Jamaica

WHEN Kenneth Kaunda was president of Zambia, his dictatorial regime made and applied laws that permitted political opponents to be arrested without charge and detained without trial (for unlimited time (January 11). He is detained under the very laws of which he was the author.
Ron Westerman,
Bayreuth, Germany

YOUR informative December 21 article on El Alamein landmines incorrectly states that Field Marshal Montgomery (who had not yet attained that rank) "stopped the Afrika Korps under General Rommel". It was Britain's forgotten hero, General Claude Auchinleck, who merits that distinction.
Peter Sanford,
Courtenay, BC, Canada

WHEN a few poor people in the Labour-run borough of Islington owed a few hundred pounds in poll tax, the council called for them to be jailed. When Dame Shirley Porter owes Westminster council £27 million (December 28), Labour's local government minister, Hilary Armstrong, feebly bleats that she hopes that the off-shore dame will have the "moral decency" to pay up.
George Stern,
London

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Lawyers for Botha plan to fight back

**David Beresford
in Johannesburg**

SOUTH AFRICA'S former state president, P W Botha, is ignoring a final appeal by the truth commission to testify before it and is expected to fight prosecution by arguing that Archbishop Desmond Tutu's investigators are in breach of an implied agreement.

Indications that Mr Botha is going to fight to the bitter end come amid disclosures last week that Nelson Mandela had intervened personally in the row by giving the former head of state extra public funding to deal with the commission.

Mr Mandela's office confirmed the president had been party to a decision that Mr Botha's lawyers will be paid more than twice the going rate to represent him against the commission. "We did not want to be vindictive, we did not want to create problems," explained the justice minister, Dullah Omar.

President Mandela has long appeared more sympathetic to Mr Botha — responsible for one of the uglier periods of apartheid rule — than to F W de Klerk, who let him out of prison and surrendered power on behalf of the white community.

Sources close to Mr Botha say that his defence against his pending prosecution for refusing to appear before the truth panel will be that there was an understanding that he would give written answers to its queries. His lawyers will protest that the commission then subpoenaed him before bothering to read 1,700 pages of submissions he had made.

Mr Botha is due to appear in court in his home town of George next week. He faces a possible sentence of two years' imprisonment, or a 20,000 rand ($4,000) fine, for ignoring the subpoena.

Lawyers have been quoted in the South African press as saying the matter could take up to two years to reach trial and that Mr Botha is unlikely to be imprisoned. However, one Johannesburg newspaper, the Mail and Guardian, said last week that there was no reason why it could not be dealt with expeditiously and suggested that "the obvious course of action for the courts is to impose a two-year sentence, suspended on condition he co-operates fully with the commission".

A boy peeps out from behind armed citizens of Daira de Ramika, western Algeria. The village was one of the four where armed gangs killed more than 400 people on the first day of Ramadan

Algeria bridles at EU visit

Ian Black

THE Algerian government, bristling at suggestions that it is to blame for recent massacres, is making clear that it will lay down tough conditions for a European Union delegation being sent to reflect mounting concern about the bloodshed.

As diplomats last week prepared for a mission to be led by Britain, the current EU president, all the signs were that its terms of reference would be severely restricted — and that it may not be possible to overcome disagreements to allow it to go ahead.

Algeria said that it was prepared to meet EU diplomats to discuss "confronting terrorism". Robin Cook, Britain's Foreign Secretary, cautiously announced the mission "in principle" after outrage over reports that 1,000 people had been killed in 10 days during the Muslim month of Ramadan.

But Ahmed Benyamina, Algeria's ambassador to Britain, complained that an original offer by Germany to help the military regime fight terrorism had now become something quite different. "In principle, we have no objection to such an EU visit, but the mandate is still not agreed," he said. "The whole idea has been perverted and has come down to a mere offer of humanitarian aid. That's not good enough. We're obviously not talking about the same thing, so the visit is still in limbo."

The recent bloodletting has been attributed to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), but there are suspicions — angrily rejected by Algiers — that its security forces may be implicated, either via infiltration of extremist groups or by turning a blind eye to atrocities to encourage people to reject the fundamentalists.

It is hoped that the visit might take place before January 26, when the EU's 15 foreign ministers meet in Brussels. Ministers themselves will not go to Algiers, but officials will have to be senior enough in protocol terms to meet the country's foreign minister, Ahmed Attaf.

British Foreign Office officials, anxious to assuage the Algerians, played down expectations of the mission. They insisted that its mandate was not expected to be agreed until this week, that Algerian concerns would be taken into account, and that the EU wanted to express its concern and see how it could help.

Britain has said it might suggest providing counselling to victims of terrorism. But one diplomat said: "All we can do is offer. It's up to the Algerians. If they don't want it they don't want it."

Algerian officials say privately they neither want nor need humanitarian aid and add that European governments, which they accuse of giving shelter to exiled extremists, are staging a stunt to assuage public opinion whipped up by the media.

Algeria is rattled by the sudden interest after a lack of international attention since the crisis erupted in 1992. The United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, condemned the massacres last August, but his offer of assistance was brusquely rejected by President Lamine Zeroual.

International human rights groups said the planned EU mission should be no substitute for a UN-sponsored inquiry. "We welcome the intended visit, but with conditions. This should not be a smoke-screen," said Jean-Paul Marthoz, European spokesman for Human Rights Watch. "This EU mission should not at all be a substitute for a UN investigative commission."

● An armed gang attacked two villages near the Algerian capital, slaughtering up to 120 people in a cinema and a mosque, hospital sources and witnesses reported on Monday. The security forces put the number of dead at 103 and said 70 others had been injured, including two soldiers.

Comment, page 12

Paris denies arming Hutus for genocide

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French foreign ministry this week vehemently denied sending huge consignments of weapons to the Hutu authorities in Rwanda after the massacre of the Tutsi minority, in which 850,000 people died, began in April 1994.

"French authorities did not approve any arms shipments after the peace accords of August 4, 1993," a ministry spokesman, Yves Doutriaux, said. The ministry denied a similar news report in November 1996.

On Monday Le Figaro published a document showing an order for $8 million worth of heavy machine-gun and mortar ammunition from France and gave details of operations in which tonnes of weapons and equipment were flown to Kigali, the former Belgian territory's capital, or neighbouring Zaire, now Congo. Some weapons were said to have arrived after the United Nations imposed an embargo.

The paper's Africa correspondent, Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, claimed that support for the Hutu-led regime was a high-handed act by the late President François Mitterrand, who was quoted as telling an aide that "genocide in those sort of countries isn't very important".

Other newspapers took up Le Figaro's allegations to support demands for an inquiry into French responsibility, which has never been admitted, despite a parliamentary inquiry in Belgium that examined France's role in Rwanda.

Last October, the French minister for African co-operation, Charles Josselin, dismissed demands for a similar inquiry, saying that his country had "not wielded the machetes which killed hundreds of thousands of Tutsis".

Although Mitterrand ordered a reinforcement of links with the Hutu majority in Rwanda from 1990, it was Edouard Balladur's Gaullist-led government that was in power when the massacres began. The Rwanda murders are only the second recognised act of genocide, after the killing of Jews in the second world war, and are the subject of war crimes investigations.

But France's refusal to inquire publicly into the political background has shocked human rights organisations. Le Figaro said Mitterrand's initiative was incomprehensible because France was a "co-belligerent" in the civil war.

"The left had an absurd strategy based on the need for necessary democracy because the Hutus were in the right as they were 10 times more numerous than the Tutsis [Rwanda's hereditary ruling classes]," the paper said. "The right was hardly less blind, refusing to admit that Africa was changing."

The key document in Le Figaro included an acknowledgment to the Rwandan embassy in Paris of an order to the French state-run armaments supplier Sofremas. The $8 million order included 12,000 shells and 20,000 mortar rounds. The last delivery was flown in on July 18, 1994, the paper said, after France had dispatched a UN-mandated peacekeeping force.

The Week

THE US government welcomed a call for dialogue from Iran's president, Mohammed Khatami, but again urged Tehran to enter official talks.
Washington Post, page 15

RAMZI YOUSEF, convicted of masterminding the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and an aeroplane bombing in 1994, was sentenced to life without parole by a New York court.

NINETEEN members of the Council of Europe agreed to prohibit efforts "to create human beings genetically identical to another human being", but Britain and Germany did not sign the protocol.

LOUISE FRECHETTE, Canada's deputy defence minister, has been named deputy secretary-general of the United Nations, a post established for the first time in the organisation's 52-year history.

AN APOLOGY by the Japanese government for the country's treatment of British prisoners of war was described as "insulting" by British war veterans.

THE Zambian government accused the detained former president, Kenneth Kaunda, and two other politicians of paying junior army officers $250 to carry out a coup attempt last October.

A POWERFUL earthquake near China's Great Wall killed 50 people and wounded 10,000 in villages in Zhangbei county. Tens of thousands were left homeless in bitter winter cold.

VIETNAM delivered a brutally clear warning against corruption when a once high-living businessman and two associates were taken by police to a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City and shot in front of a crowd.

THE UN World Food Programme appealed for nearly $400 million in emergency aid to avert famine in North Korea, saying that food stocks in the country could run out by April.

Jobless embarrass Jospin and Kohl

Paul Webster in Paris and Ian Traynor in Bonn

FRANCE'S increasingly militant unemployed threw out a fresh challenge to the government last week when an offer by the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, of more than $160 million in emergency unemployment benefits was rejected by jobseekers' representatives. Another national day of street marches for the unemployed took place on Tuesday.

In a belated attempt to win back the credibility of his Socialist-led government after three weeks of demonstrations by jobseekers, Mr Jospin had announced an emergency fund to help the long-term unemployed.

The offer followed a move by riot police into several of the 30 welfare centres occupied by demonstrators claiming payments of about $500 each to cover end-of-year bills. At other centres, mainly in Marseille, demonstrators dispersed before police could act, but four protest organisations, claiming that government action was insufficient, said they would continue their sit-ins.

Mr Jospin was forced into a hurried decision after countrywide marches last week followed sit-ins at unemployment offices. Most of the marchers receive benefits averaging only $650 a month because they have been out of work for more than a year.

Of France's 3.1 million jobless, about 1.1 million are long-term unemployed. There were fears of further discontent after Communist, Green and Socialist members of the governing coalition expressed sympathy for the demonstration and criticised the labour minister, Martine Aubry, for failing to respond quickly.

Mr Jospin made his offer after meeting trade unions, employers and representatives of jobless workers' organisations. It was the first time that the unemployed had been consulted.

In Germany unemployment soared to a fresh peak of more than 4.5 million last month, forcing Chancellor Helmut Kohl to open an election year last week by conceding that an earlier pledge to halve the jobless rate by the millennium would go unredeemed.

Climbing to its highest level in the history of the post-war federal republic, unemployment last month stood at almost 12 per cent nationally, with a 20 per cent rate in east Germany double that in the west, it was announced last week.

Bernhard Jagoda, the head of the federal employment office in Nuremberg, said he did not expect any improvement this year. "All in all, economic dynamism was not strong enough in 1997 for recovery in the labour market," he said.

Exactly two years ago, when the jobless rate went through the 4-million pain threshold, Mr Kohl promised to halve the rate by 2000. Last week he admitted defeat. The target would "certainly not be reached," he stated.

It was his first public admission that his policy had gone awry. It could hardly come at a worse time as he prepares to bid for a record fifth term as chancellor in September, and faces a couple of crucial regional elections before then.

● Four of Germany's leading Eurosceptics — three economists and a law professor — went to the supreme court this week to challenge the government's enthusiasm for the single European currency and to try to get the project scrapped.

Le Monde, page 13

Israel plans to double settlements

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

ISRAEL plans to double its settler population in territory destined to become a Palestinian state by building more than 30,000 new homes, it was revealed last week.

News of the construction plan, which would take 20 years, was revealed by the daily Ha'aretz newspaper and has pushed tension between the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Palestinians and Washington to new limits.

President Clinton's Middle East envoy, Dennis Ross, who made little headway in meetings with the two sides last week before White House appointments later this month, said further construction was "not helpful".

The European Union said that the plan would damage the peace process.

The United States has asked Israel to suspend building to improve the climate in peace talks, but Mr Netanyahu has argued that there is nothing in the existing agreements which prevents "natural growth".

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who served as housing minister in the last Labour government, said such huge construction would wipe out peace hopes.

The housing ministry confirmed that it has plans to build 30,000 more homes in the settlements by 2020, but denied that nearly half of the projects have been given the green light.

"We conducted a survey of potential building possibilities in the country, and we arrived at the conclusion that in the settlements, 30,000 more homes could be added, half of which could be in the Jerusalem area," the ministry spokesman, Moshe Eilat, said. He said the survey was conducted because of forecasts that Israel's population would grow by 1 million over the next 20 years.

If construction goes ahead, the settlement of Ariel, 15km southwest of Nablus, would more than double in size, adding 3,690 more homes to its present 3,300 units, Ha'aretz said.

The defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, the supreme planning authority in the Israeli-held territories across the Green Line under military occupation, has already approved 2,150 of Ariel's new homes, it said.

The Ma'aleh Ephraim settlement, at the edge of the Jordan Rift Valley, will be expanded from 400 homes by an additional 561 units, all approved and some already under construction, it said. And Ma'aleh Adumim, east of Jerusalem, with a population of around 20,000 in 5,000 residential units, will almost double in size.

"For all practical purposes, there is no peace process right now," the Palestinian information minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, said. "The Israeli position is more settlement, more land confiscation and more arrogance in refusing to implement the [peace] agreement."

Le Monde, page 13

Child labour figures put Italy to shame

John Hooper in Rome

FORTY years after it joined the European Community, and more than a decade after it overtook Britain in the league table of national wealth, Italy still has almost 300,000 child workers.

This statistic — which neither the government nor employers have challenged — is based on research by the biggest trade union federation. Sergio Cofferati, head of the leftwing CGIL, produced the figure on a visit to India where Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi, has been trying to open doors for Italian traders and investors.

Mr Cofferati was warning of the dangers of buying goods from, or shares in, companies that used child labour. For example, Italy is a big importer of footballs stitched by children in Indian sweatshops. But the problem, he said, was not confined to the developing world.

"We estimate that in Italy nearly 300,000 children are made to work on a daily basis," he said. "Precise data do not exist. All we have are the figures for reported industrial accidents on which this estimate is based."

The biggest concentration of under-age workers is thought to be in and around Naples, where their wages average about 70,000 lire ($40) a week. Many children are employed in the manufacture of fake designer clothes and accessories. There are hundreds of small family businesses turning out fake goods on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.

Other under-age workers serve in bars and shops or lend a hand as unofficially apprenticed motor mechanics. The use of children as drug couriers is common.

The minimum working age in Italy is 15. But a recent survey for the employment ministry found that 30 per cent of boys between the ages of 10 and 14 in southern Italy were in employment.

In 1995, the last year for which figures are available, government inspectors looked into cases of suspected under-age employment at almost 30,000 companies. Their suspicions were proved right in 11-12 per cent of the small commercial and industrial firms they investigated.

A Pakistani crowd carries the bodies of Shias shot in a Lahore cemetery last Sunday. The protesters tried to storm the Punjab parliament and burned buildings in anger at the massacre, in which 28 Shias died and at least 35 were injured. A Sunni Muslim group, Jhangvi, claimed responsibility for the killings

Woman power halts work on Indian dam

John Vidal

IT WAS a scene Mahatma Gandhi would have applauded. After months of secret preparations, the 10,000 Indian villagers travelled in complete silence at the dead of night under a full moon. Led by women and dodging police roadblocks, they reached their destination at dawn. In the half-light they streamed down the steep valley to the huge partly-built dam on the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.

Within minutes they had surprised the few guards and cut radio communications between the construction camp and the outside world. By 6.30am one of the largest peaceful sit-ins in Indian history had begun.

Details of the capture of the Maheshwar dam by villagers who will lose their homes or land if the 30-metre high barrier is completed are still sketchy, but reports from Delhi on Monday suggested that 25,000 protesters were at the remote site.

"Thousands of people from other areas are pouring in. At least 2,000 people are preparing to stay indefinitely," said a spokesman for the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Narmada Movement), which has been mobilising people against the project.

The Maheshwar dam is part of the $4.9 billion Narmada Valley Development Project, which involves plans for 30 big dams, 135 medium-sized ones and 3,000 small ones in the valley. The World Bank pulled out of the controversial project five years ago because of fierce local and international protests against proposals that would have displaced more than 100,000 people.

The 400-megawatt Maheshwar dam, the first privatised hydroelectric power project in India, will submerge the homes of more than 2,200 families in 61 villages and destroy thousands of acres of cotton, chillies and wheat.

Opponents claim it will produce electricity for only a few hours a day, and that it has quadrupled in cost in 10 years. They say they have received no compensation and that the dam will destroy the economy of a large area.

The government of Madhya Pradesh says the project will bring electricity and economic development to areas hundreds of kilometres away.

Protests against the damming of the Narmada began more than 10 years ago, and thousands of women have said they are prepared to drown rather than move. This is the first time that all work has been stopped on one of the dam sites.

"The people have taken over the blasting and construction works area. They are demanding complete stoppage of all work on the dam and a review with people's participation. The siege will continue until the demands are met," said a spokesman for the Delhi Forum.

Digvijay Singh, the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, tried to appease the villagers. Speaking in the state capital, Bhopal, he called a meeting for Thursday and officially halted construction until then.

This was rejected by the villagers: "We have stopped the work, not him," a villager replied. "We will not go until all work has been permanently stopped."

On October 3, villagers staged a rally of 10,000 people in the area, calling for work on the dam to be stopped and the project reviewed in consultation with the people. They received no response from the project or the government; in fact the work was speeded up.

High noon in Pakistan's opium valley

Jonathan Steele in Timergara reports on a paramilitary mission to wipe out a drug crop

THE battle to cut supplies of heroin to western Europe has moved into the last no-go areas of Pakistan, with paramilitary troops fanning out against some of the world's most heavily armed farmers of opium poppy.

A search-and-destroy campaign is targeting narrow ravines in North-west Frontier Province, which the police have previously been unable to enter. Foreign aid workers have been warned not to use the road across the valley floor along the Panjkora river for fear of hostage-taking.

The flood of weapons into the region during the Soviet occupation of neighbouring Afghanistan means farmers now possess machine-guns, rocket-launchers and even Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.

"These are rough and tough hills, which are unapproachable and inaccessible," said Qazi Mohammed Yusuf, the district commissioner, as he sat in his office in Timergara, the capital of Dir district, Pakistan's largest poppy-growing region.

The use of force in the Nihag valley, the last no-go area in Dir, is being co-ordinated with the United Nations Drugs Control Programme (UNDCP). The programme's new chief, Pino Arlacchi, is a former Italian anti-Mafia adviser. He visited Afghanistan recently to urge the Taliban authorities to move against their own opium producers, and continued on to Peshawar, the main city in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier province.

The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is virtually open, and people on both sides belong to the same ethnic group, although they are known as Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pathans in Pakistan. For the first time UN officials are pressing for simultaneous action on drugs in both countries. They want to prevent the "balloon effect", under which a clampdown on poppy-growing in one area encourages it in another.

In Dir, where the planting season has just started, the effects of a possible reduction in Afghanistan's opium harvest are already visible. "Traders have been talking up the price, and we have evidence that more farmers are planting opium than last year," said Simon Gillett, the UNDCP's senior technical adviser in Dir.

Even in valleys where poppy-growing has been eliminated for several years, farmers admit they are tempted to start again.

Alongside the Pakistani government's use of force, the UN drug programme offers a set of economic incentives to end poppy cultivation. The original aim was to persuade farmers to grow alternative crops, but officials realised that opium-producing areas needed more than that. There had to be a programme of sustainable development, including tarred roads, irrigation, electricity, credit and training if farmers were to be weaned off poppy cultivation.

A man can easily carry a sack of opium gum down a mountain-side on his back. To reach the market and make the same profit from heavier crops, such as onions or tomatoes, a farmer needs a tarred road and a pick-up truck.

Pakistan and Afghanistan became Asia's top opium producers in the late 1970s after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of the mojahedin, who used opium-growing to help finance the war against the Soviet Union. Difficulties in transporting opium prompted traders and smugglers to set up laboratories in the border areas to process heroin, which is lighter and more valuable.

"You need a critical mass of farmers to give up if you want to turn the tide in an area," said Mr Gillett. But, in the narrow, snow-capped Nihag valley, the critical mass is still pro-poppy. Village elders have intimidated farmers with the threat of having their houses burnt down if they do not plant the poppy.

In most of Pakistan the campaign against the poppy has been remarkably successful, with production dropping from 800 tonnes in 1980 to 24 tonnes last year.

Across the border in Afghanistan, the chaos of war, sustained European demand for heroin and the ease with which smugglers can carry it by lorry, camel or pick-up truck to Iran and Turkmenistan have led to a steep rise in production. Where the Taliban has restored peace, production has continued to increase, reaching 2,804 tonnes this year, against 400 tonnes in 1980. Afghanistan has become the world's biggest producer of opium.

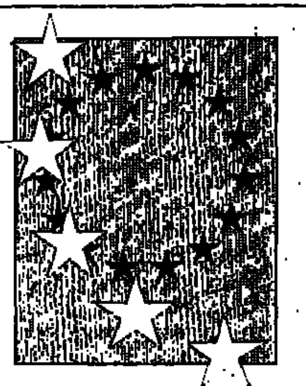
Mr Arlacchi hopes to export the anti-poppy strategy used in Pakistan to Afghanistan. The Taliban authorities have said the production of opium runs counter to Islam, but they will try to stop it only if the outside world helps farmers grow alternative crops.

Whether or not the Taliban rulers have understood that they cannot get aid without doing some enforcement, the Pakistanis have. The use of paramilitary troops in Dir is meant to impress foreign governments as much as the highlanders of Nihag.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Continent basks in splendid isolation



Europe this week

Martin Walker

THE INGRAINED sense of detachment and uniqueness in "the right little, tight little island" of Britain has long been both a joke and an irritation to its European neighbours. Its modern manifestation has been the reluctance of Conservative and now Labour governments to join one of those characteristically idealist European ventures, the Schengen agreement, to scrap frontier controls across the continent.

Signed 12 years ago in the tiny Luxembourg village of Schengen, within spitting distance of France on one side and Germany on the other, the agreement in theory allows a European Union citizen to travel from Spain to Finland without a passport. Once the single currency arrives, continental Europe could return to that golden age once celebrated by the historian A J P Taylor, when he described how the freeborn Englishman of 1913 could travel from London to St Petersburg without ever having to show a passport or change his gold sovereigns.

That European dream received a nasty jolt last week. The continent that between 1985 and 1996 absorbed more than 3.4 million refugees from eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and the Middle East reeled under the impact of some 1,200 Kurdish refugees. France and Austria re-instated border patrols with Italy, whose almost unpoliceable 4,800km coastline makes it the favoured port of entry for illegal immigrants and their smugglers.

There were panic meetings of the Schengen nations in Brussels, and of Europe's police chiefs in Rome. And both Kurdish spokesmen and Turkish human rights activists charged that the Turkish government was deliberately encouraging the exodus, to punish Europe for its brusque rebuff of Turkish hopes of eventual membership at last month's EU summit in Luxembourg. The main excuse for Turkey's exclusion was its human rights record, notably its harsh campaign against separatist Kurdish guerrillas.

The European Commission almost washed its hands of the matter, saying that the Schengen principle should remain inviolate, and reminding member states that Schengen balanced open internal borders with intensely tightened borders with the outside world. The Schengen agreement has sobered civil liberties groups with its powers of strengthened police co-operation to control crime, drugs and terrorism.

Police forces now have the right of cross-border arrest and "hot pursuit" and are building a fearsome Schengen-wide database of names and details of known or suspected criminals. Last week Italy, under pressure from Germany, Austria and France, agreed to abolish its 15-day grace period before a refugee denied admission must leave the country. It now seems resigned to building detention centres to hold refugees pending deportation.

And in a separate but hardly unrelated development Germany's government and main opposition parties agreed to scrap its post-1945 law against phone-tapping, citing the need to protect Germany from international crime.

The problem is that until the Amsterdam treaty is ratified, and until EU governments then agree a common policy on immigration and asylum for refugees, each Schengen country is stuck with the implications of varying national laws.



Kurdish refugees outside the charity centre at Santa Foca, near Otranto, in Italy PHOTO: PIER PAOLO CITO

The panicked reaction by the north Europeans to the small Kurdish exodus now reveals the problem with Schengen, but it also points to something more profound, to the way that the EU as a whole is starting to catch the "right little, tight little island" mentality.

A STRIKING sign of this mood of splendid European isolationism came this month from the European finance commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, who insisted that the Asian financial crisis was having only "a marginal, even negligible effect" on the EU economies and the move to a single currency.

"The euro already acts as a shield for Europe, even before the single currency is launched," he said. "The markets have confidence in Europe, because of the sound financial policies that all member states have pursued for some years in order to meet the criteria for joining the euro."

The first full debate among EU commissioners on the Asian crisis was dominated by De Silguy's ebullient report. He brushed aside accusations that Europe was complacently distancing itself from the threat to the global economy by pointing out that the five months of the Asian crisis had seen growth in Europe, low inflation, and falling interest rates.

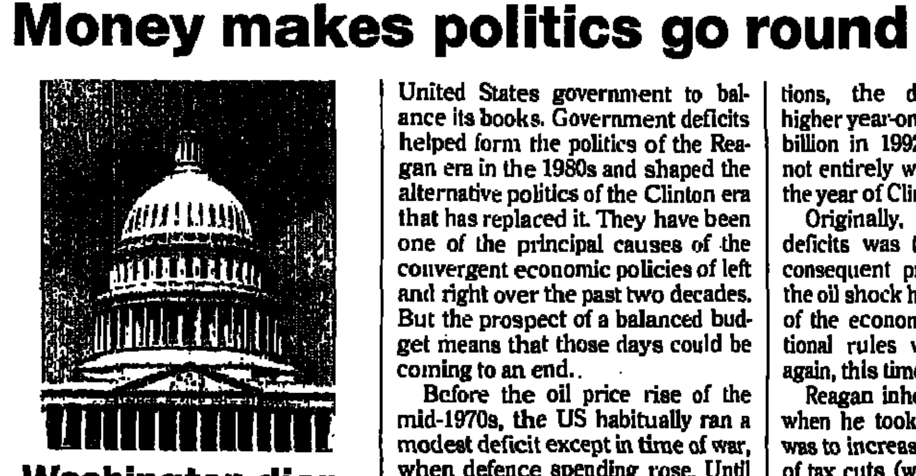
"Our European banks have a total exposure of only $364 billion, and half of that is in the relatively sound economies of Singapore and Hong Kong," De Silguy said, adding that the EU had "full confidence" in the much-criticised rescue strategies being pursued by the International Monetary Fund. Europe's future growth did not depend on exports, he insisted, claiming that Europe's recovery was now fuelled by domestic demand.

This detachment looked a touch surreal last week when the 20 European commissioners took the Channel tunnel train to London for a day of meetings with the British government to discuss the coming six months of Britain's presidency of the EU Council. It was almost a love-in.

The Commission president, Jacques Santer, said he hoped the UK presidency would "transmit to the peoples of Europe the new spirit of dynamism, vigour and creativity that is once again the hallmark of the United Kingdom today". Skating over Britain's exception to the Schengen system and its refusal to join the first wave of the new single currency, Prime Minister Tony Blair replied that the presidency "presents a very great opportunity for Britain to show that by being constructive and engaged and positive, we can play a leading role in shaping Europe's future".

Reality should set in this week, as Blair and Santer arrived in Tokyo for the EU-Japan summit, even as the Japanese prime minister was juggling with the calendar to try to spare them an hour or two. The Diet, Japan's parliament, decided to reconvene to grapple with the Asian financial crisis on the very day scheduled for the EU summit. If the Europeans don't think the Asian collapse has much to do with them, why should Asians put themselves out to meet these new representatives of splendid isolation?

Money makes politics go round



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

TO HAIL the end of an era is often to court ridicule, but when Bill Clinton announced, on his first morning back in the White House in 1998, that he would deliver a balanced federal budget in 1999, few disputed that a milestone had been reached.

An entire generation of American politics has been defined by the continuing and deepening failure of the United States government to balance its books. Government deficits helped form the politics of the Reagan era in the 1980s and shaped the alternative politics of the Clinton era that has replaced it. They have been one of the principal causes of the convergent economic policies of left and right over the past two decades. But the prospect of a balanced budget means that those days could be coming to an end.

Before the oil price rise of the mid-1970s, the US habitually ran a modest deficit except in time of war, when defence spending rose. Until recent times, the big deficit years of the 20th century were 1918-19 and 1942-46; in 1968, at the height of the Vietnam war, the deficit again hit a post-1945 record.

Then came the oil price explosion, which transformed peacetime economic policies across the West into conditions akin to those of war. In 1974, the US budget deficit was $6 billion; but in 1975 it leapt to $53 billion, a total that had previously been exceeded only at the height of the second world war. After that, with occasional fluctuations, the deficit steadily rose higher year-on-year, peaking at $290 billion in 1992, which was also — not entirely without coincidence — the year of Clinton's election.

Originally, the cause of high deficits was the oil shortage and consequent price rise. But before the oil shock had been squeezed out of the economic system, the traditional rules were re-written once again, this time by the Republicans.

Reagan inherited a record deficit when he took office. His response was to increase it, by a combination of tax cuts (which reduced government income) and higher defence spending (which exceeded cuts in social programmes and thus added to government spending). The result was the West's victory in the cold war as the Soviet Union collapsed under the burden of its efforts to keep up with US defence spending. However, the price was that when Clinton succeeded George Bush in 1993, the deficit was nearly two-and-a-half times higher in real terms than it had been when Reagan succeeded Jimmy Carter in 1981.

As a result of the Reagan years, gross federal debt ballooned from just under $1 trillion in 1981 to about $5.5 trillion today — a direct result of the nation's lurch into deficit budgeting. Last year the government estimated that the US's debt-to-GDP ratio for 1997 would be some 69 per cent. This is more than twice the ratio in the Carter-Reagan handover year of 1981, which was the record post-war low year for national debt. No US president for the foreseeable future can therefore afford to relax fiscal discipline.

A watershed has nevertheless been crossed — both in budgetary terms and also in political terms. Within the constraints of budgetary balance, and while American non-inflationary growth continues at current levels, US economic policy makers now have many more genuine options than for many years past. Instead of agreeing to reduce the deficit, politicians can now begin to discuss how to dispose of any surplus. In policy terms, the era of convergence is now giving way to an era of divergence.

For the Republicans who created most of the US deficit crisis of the late 20th century, the instinctive response to Clinton's budgetary achievement is to blow any future surpluses in tax cuts. In an election year — and every other year is an election year in the US — the electoral attractions of tax cuts are easy to see, which is why so many incumbent governors of both parties are planning tax cuts at state level before the voters go the polls in November. At the federal level, however, Clinton is not showing his hand until he sends the 1998 Budget to Congress after his State of the Union speech at the end of this month. Even so, Clinton is clearly under pressure to invest the surplus in public goods rather than to give it to individuals to invest in private ones.

The passing — for the moment — of the era of budget deficits does not wipe the slate clean of the problems and inherited fears of the past. But it alters the centre of gravity of the debate about "who collects what money from whom in order to spend on what", which, as Gore Vidal recently wrote in the New Yorker, "is all there is to politics, and in a serious country should be the central preoccupation of the media". And that, surely, can only be a moment about which to give thanks.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Mr Cook, the VIP lounge, his wife and his lovers

IT HAD been known for some months that the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, had parted from his wife of 28 years, who is a consultant haematologist in Scotland, and taken up with his Commons secretary, Gaynor Regan. It seemed like a sad though civilised parting of ways, and little was made of it.

The tale took on a different complexion last week when Dr Margaret Cook "let slip" in an interview that her husband had had several affairs during their marriage. She told how the break-up came about in a VIP lounge at London's Heathrow airport when her husband was telephoned by the Prime Minister's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, to say that a Sunday newspaper had "got the story" of his affair with Ms Regan.

Mr Campbell's instruction was that the Foreign Secretary should remain in the country to face the music. So Mr Cook took his wife aside, confessed to his relationship with Ms Regan, and told her that their planned holiday was off and the marriage over.

Until the scandal resurfaced, Mr Cook was clearly enjoying himself. After a shaky start, he had been moving with some assurance on the world stage and was also the star of a TV documentary in which he was portrayed as a modern politician imbuing one of government's stuffier institutions with a new sense of openness and dynamism.

There was much speculation as to whether the revelations about his colourful private life would mar his effectiveness as Foreign Secretary, in which role he claims to pursue an "ethical" foreign policy. Fortunately he has never been a moraliser, though Tories were quick to point out that Labour in opposition was relentless in its pursuit of Conservative ministers who strayed from the straight and narrow.

Mr Cook has now dropped plans to have Ms Regan accompany him on his forthcoming trip to Washington and Ottawa. It is thought the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, feared that Mr Cook's marital situation might overshadow the visit's importance.

GORDON BROWN is today the Chancellor of the Exchequer, rather than prime minister, because he and Mr Blair agreed not to split the Labour party by standing against one another in the leadership election following the sudden death of John Smith. That, at least, was the general understanding.

A biography of the Chancellor, placed on sale prematurely by a Glasgow bookshop last week, offers a different story: that Mr Blair broke a secret promise not to stand against Mr Brown in the leadership election. The book also details a "whispering campaign" mounted against Mr Brown at the time, in which roles were allegedly played by Peter Mandelson, now Minister without Portfolio, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, both close allies of Mr Blair.

If the Chancellor has indeed cooperated in the preparation of the book, as is claimed, it would do much to explain his seeming remoteness from the charmed prime ministerial circle, and his occasional policy battles with Cabinet colleagues such as Mr Cook, who is known to covet the Treasury job.

DAMAGE estimated at £10 million was caused when a tornado hit the Sussex seaside town of Selsey. The twister travelled along the beach at Selsey Bill, which juts out into the English Channel, damaging about 1,000 homes and uprooting the garden observatories of the astronomer, Patrick Moore.

Climatic conditions in Britain are not often ripe for tornadoes. When they occur, vortices are usually small, wind speeds are modest and they sometimes even pass unnoticed. At Selsey, speed at the core of the rotating wind reached more than 100mph, but only two people were slightly injured.

WHILE MOST British towns are wondering what to do to mark the millennium, the Sussex town of Lewes has decided to allow Rodin's sculpture, The Kiss, to return to its original home, if only for six months, from June 1999 to January 2000.

The sculpture, one of four similar works by Rodin, was commissioned some 80 years ago by E P Warren, an American antiquarian dealer who lived in Lewes, and who stipulated that the genitals of the man depicted in the piece should be "complete and distinct". The small-mindedness of the small town concluded that the sculpture would "inflame the passions of the young soldiery" billeted there and it was withdrawn from public view, ending up eventually at London's Tate Gallery, which is to lend it for the millennium.

WHITEHALL sources have confirmed that the Security Service, MI5, is speeding up the destruction of thousands of files on individuals it once considered subversive as part of an attempt to modernise.

The policy shift was prompted by embarrassing disclosures last year by David Shayler, a former MI5 officer, who revealed that the agency kept files on a number of prominent politicians — including the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

The head of MI5, Stephen Lander, has said privately that the number of files held by the agency were in "the low hundreds of thousands".

MI5 is preparing a new brochure, expected in March, outlining new priorities, including countering international terrorism and organised crime.

Austin



Mowlam gamble pays off

John Mullin

THE controversial decision by the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, to go to the Maze prison in Belfast to address loyalist prisoners last week paid off when they reversed their opposition to the peace process.

As a result of the Maze decision by the Ulster Defence Association and Ulster Freedom Fighters, the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP), which is linked to the UDA/UFF, took its place at the negotiating table when talks resumed on Monday.

Another loyalist political party, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), which speaks for the Ulster Volunteer Force, also attended the talks after threatening to withdraw last week.

The Government's euphoria was undermined over the weekend, however, following another attack on a Catholic by the fringe Loyalist Volunteer Force.

Terry Enright, a doorman who was related to the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, was shot dead by gunmen outside a Belfast nightclub owned by relatives of the PUP leader, David Ervine.

The LVF is opposed to the ceasefire and peace process, and has killed two Catholics since the murder of its leader, Billy Wright, at the Maze three weeks ago.

Ms Mowlam met the five-man leadership of the 130 UDA/UFF prisoners at the Maze for 50 minutes. She emphasised that there could be no settlement on Northern Ireland's future without talks and promised a more important role for the talks sub-committee dealing with confidence-building measures.

Asked afterwards about prisoners and possible changes in parole arrangements, Ms Mowlam said: "If we can get confidence in the talks process and if we can get progress in the weeks and months ahead, within that context a number of issues can be addressed."

She ruled out any benefits for prisoners belonging to paramilitary organisations actively engaged in terrorism.

Among the UDA/UFF leadership she met in the governor's office at H-Block 7 were Michael Stone, who is serving six life sentences for murder, and Johnny Adair, nicknamed Mad Dog. He was jailed in 1995 for 16 years for directing terrorism as UFF commander on Belfast's Shankill Road.

Ms Mowlam apologised to victims' relatives who had complained about her initiative. She thanked others who had suffered but who had telephoned their support.

She said: "I have listened and it's a difficult balance, but I don't want to leave a stone unturned. I want to be sure we did everything we could to keep the process moving forward."

Ms Mowlam later briefly met IRA prisoners' leaders and a delegation from the Ulster Volunteer Force in the governor's offices in their respective blocks, H-Block 8 and H-Block 1. Among those she spoke to was Harry Maguire, an IRA prisoner serving two life sentences for the murder of two army corporals in 1988, and Noel Large, a UVF man given four life terms.

Ms Mowlam, who has been accused of setting a dangerous precedent, confirmed she would go back to see convicted terrorists if necessary.

That position has proved controversial in Northern Ireland, and Lord Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party, launched an angry attack after the meeting. He said that the loyalist paramilitaries had hyped up the situation, and Ms Mowlam had fallen into their web. "Both she and they can claim a great victory, thoroughly ensconsing them as the important arbitrators of our future, not democratic politicians."

Gary McMichael, leader of the UDP, denied there had been any brinkmanship. "It was a symbolic recognition by Mo Mowlam in coming to see the prisoners that they and the issues at the heart of this crisis were being taken seriously."

Stalking law used to end son's mental abuse

Stuart Millar

A LAW designed to tackle stalkers was used last week to protect a disabled mother from her aggressive son in a case which has made legal history.

In a verdict which lawyers believe could open the floodgates for dozens of similar cases, Christos Shartos was found guilty of harassing his widowed mother to such an extent that she suffered psychological harm.

It is the first time that the charge, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, has been used in a case of this kind. Introduced after a series of cases in which judges were powerless to act against stalkers, the legislation was devised to deal with people whose obsessive behaviour caused lasting psychological harm to their victims, even though there was no physical assault.

Wood Green crown court, in north London, heard that for three years Shartos, a former jeweller, persistently forced his mother to hand over cash to feed his heroin addiction.

Parakevou Shartos, aged 63, gave her son hundreds of pounds, but whenever she appeared hesitant, he ranted and raved, inflicting "mental beatings" on her. Sometimes he went "berserk", smashing up the family home if he did not get his own way.

Eventually, she heeded her doctor's advice and went to the police after developing what a psychologist described as a "major depressive disorder" and post-traumatic stress syndrome.

The jury took 34 minutes to reject Shartos's claims that his mother had repeatedly lied in her evidence.

They found him guilty of causing her psychologically-based actual bodily harm between January 1994 and July 1997.

Judge Richard Lowry QC, remanded Shartos, aged 32, in custody until January 30 for pre-sentence and psychiatric reports.

The Lord Chancellor predicted that the new law would lead to 300 prosecutions a year, but experts believe that the real figure will be far greater as a result of the legislation's wide scope.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
January 18 1998

Blair breaks welfare taboos

Ewen MacAskill in Tokyo and Michael White

FUNDAMENTAL changes in key state benefits to direct extra resources towards the poor at the likely expense of the affluent were signalled last weekend by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, as he announced the launch of a nationwide crusade to sell his reform of the welfare system.

Richer pensioners may not automatically get the basic state pension, child benefit for the better-off may be taxed, and highly paid mothers could cease to be entitled to state-subsidised maternity pay in order to extend it to the low paid.

Undeterred by last month's backbench revolt over the cut in single-parent benefit, Mr Blair used a television broadcast from Tokyo to underline the fact that ministers intend to drive through a strategic reform programme which he repeatedly insisted would help society's poorest, not harm them.

Mr Blair plans a series of "welfare roadshows" to win over party activists and persuade voters that reform is necessary and that the present £96 billion-a-year system is unfair and inefficient. Ministers predict that unless welfare is drastically reformed it will cost up to £107 billion a year by 2002.

The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, echoed Mr Blair's approach when she signalled a drive to direct benefits to the people who need them most.

She focused on statutory maternity pay, saying that one in five women at work receive no such state assistance when they become pregnant.

"And yet, for the most highly paid women, there's no ceiling on the amount they get, and in one case, if you earn £1 million a year you can actually get £18,000 a week from the social security system."

Turning the language of means-testing inside-out, she argued that better-off recipients could be subjected to an "affluence test" — and lose some traditional so-called universal benefits, previously paid to everyone regardless of income, if they earn above a certain level. High on such a list will be the key universal benefits, such as the basic state pension, child benefit and state maternity pay.

Mr Blair was asked whether he planned less government provision for state pensions.

He said people were already providing for themselves privately. "If all the Government does is simply increase the amount of money of the basic pension, many of the poorest don't benefit from that at all. So we have to look at ways in which we can make sure that we are getting help to those people that really need it most in the system."

Ministers are desperate for an informed public debate, free of what they regard as "scare stories" whipped up by MPs, the media or anti-poverty campaigners. Mr Blair's initiative is designed to show that, contrary to some rumours, he remains the driving force behind the planned reforms.

"They are driven by principle, the need for fairness and efficiency, not simply to save money," an ally insisted amid speculation that the campaign may well be bloody, since even some ministers harbour doubts.

The shadow chancellor, Peter Lilley, accused Mr Blair of creating "a state of confusion" over reform because it was "not thought through".

He added: "He said before the election they were against means testing, now they are talking in terms of means testing even the universal and contributory benefits."

Dewar to run for 'Scots PM'

Lawrence Donegan

THE Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, last week confirmed he is to stand for the Scottish parliament in next year's elections.

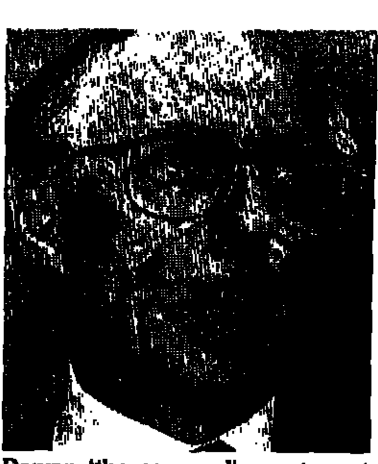
Mr Dewar, who led the successful Yes campaign in last year's devolution referendum, said he wanted to play his part in a new and exciting phase in Scottish politics, and would eventually bow out of Westminster. However, he will stay in the Cabinet as Scottish Secretary at least until the elections to the new parliament in May 1999.

The new Scottish parliament is to be built next to the Queen's official residence at Holyrood in Edinburgh, Mr Dewar announced at the weekend.

"The relationship with the government of the UK will be crucial," Mr Dewar said. "The new parliament must earn the confidence of Scots. If I can help in any way to achieve these aims as a member of the new parliament, I would very much want to do so."

Mr Dewar sought to dampen speculation that he would automatically assume the role of first minister — that would be the choice of the Scottish people, he said.

Mr Blair made it clear he would be glad to see Mr Dewar become the de facto Scottish prime minister.



Dewar: 'the new parliament must earn the confidence of Scots'

"Of course, he will be a loss to us in Government when he goes. But by standing for the Scottish parliament he will be able to exercise his qualities there. I very much welcome his decision and I think it is right for him, for Scotland and for the Labour party."

Mr Dewar's announcement followed a decision by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, who told MPs last week that he had no intention of leaving his current post.

Food crisis 'outrageous'

James Meikle

THE Government is failing to implement safety measures needed to curb an "outrageous" food poisoning crisis, the head of the inquiry into Britain's worst outbreak said this week.

Hugh Pennington of Aberdeeen university, who led investigations into the *E. coli* outbreak in Scotland in 1996 which killed 20 people, said licensing schemes for butchers, restaurants and other food outlets should be instituted immediately and supermarkets should reduce their reliance on intensively farmed foods. Other safety measures, from separate fridges for raw meat in butchers' shops to hygiene education in schools, should also be introduced without delay. "Food poisoning in the UK has now reached unacceptable levels. A million cases a year is outrageous. The tragedy is that most cases of food poisoning are preventable, but they are not being prevented. It is an unnecessary problem."

The Government was this week due to publish plans for a new Food Standards Agency. Prof Pennington said: "If they are really serious, they must implement all the recommendations in my report now . . . it is essential we make improvements to every step of the food chain, from farm to fork. There are too many unqualified people handling food at each stage of the food chain. It is, after all, a life and death issue."

His warning follows a warning by the British Medical Association that the public should treat all raw meat is infected — a claim dismissed as "scaremongering" by the Meat and Livestock Commission.

The Government is reviewing meat hygiene regulations and will soon publish league tables of abattoir standards. But a row over charging the industry for licences to help pay for the food agency has forced ministers to promise further consultation.

Film violence linked to crime

Kamal Ahmed

THE debate over the effect of violent films on the young took a fresh twist last week when new research suggested a link between video violence and criminal behaviour.

Although admitting that most teenagers were unlikely to be affected by violent films, the authors of the Home Office study said that for those in a "vulnerable" situation, films that glamorised killing could encourage them to commit more crimes.

The report said young offenders were more likely to watch violent films and associate with the kind of characters depicted by Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Violent films have the potential to cause crime," said Dr Kevin Browne, a psychologist at the University of Birmingham and author of the report. "The nine out of 10 people who do not come from vulnerable backgrounds will be less affected but for those who are not so fortunate, the frequency of their violence may increase."

Dr Browne said he was particularly concerned that inmates at Young Offenders' Institutions were allowed to watch violent films with little control. Last week the prison service said it was reviewing its guidelines.

The study re-ignites the debate on film violence and teenagers. In 1993 MPs called for certain films to be banned after Child's Play 3 was linked to the murder of James Bulger. Other films attacked include Natural Born Killers and Reservoir Dogs.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said the report would be given to the British Board of Film Classification, the body that controls the certification of films, which would be expected to study it closely.

In Brief

LABOUR expelled two of its Euro-MPs, Ken Coates and Hugh Kerr, following their long-running criticism of welfare reform and centrally-controlled candidate lists for European elections.

THE Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, ordered a new investigation of the wrecked Hull trawler Gaul, which sank without sending a distress call in 1974, prompting speculation that it was involved in a spying mission against the Soviet Union.

HACKNEY council in London was heavily criticised over its handling of the case of Mark Trotter, a children's care worker and suspected paedophile. An independent inquiry found that incompetence and political infighting led to unacceptable delays in responding to complaints about him.

Decca Aitkenhead, page 12

DEBORAH PARRY, the 39-year-old nurse awaiting trial for murder in Saudi Arabia, has been transferred to hospital suffering from depression.

EVERY schoolchild will be given a free e-mail address to use for the rest of their lives under a deal — with the Internet service Excite Inc — announced at the launch of the Government's UK NetYear programme to create a computer-literate workforce.

A GUARDIAN/ICM survey into attitudes to smoking revealed widespread public support for tough new controls, and encouragement for voluntary bans at work and in restaurants and bars.

THE Government approved the first funding for Muslim schools, allaying a long-standing grievance of the Muslim community that it was suffering discrimination by being denied the education support available to other faiths.

WILLIAM STRAW, the 17-year-old son of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, was cautioned by police following allegations by the Mirror newspaper that he supplied 1.92 grammes of cannabis to one of its reporters.

A NEW consultation paper by the BBC and ITV has called for televised party political broadcasts to be axed outside election campaigns. Executives have expressed concern that viewers are becoming increasingly bored with politics.

GORDON PARK, accused of murdering his wife 21 years ago and dumping her in Coniston Water in the Lake District, has had the charge against him dropped for lack of evidence.

SIR Michael Tippett, one of the most important composers of the century, has died aged 93.

Obituary, page 26

Brand drug prices may be halved

Julia Finch

THE price of non-prescription medicines such as painkillers, vitamin pills and nicotine patches is set to tumble after the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) announced it had started court action to overturn the law that allows drug companies to fix minimum prices for hundreds of popular products.

The move could prompt a supermarket price war and more than halve the price of big brands such as Anadin, Lemsip and Nurofen. Vitamin pills and food supplements could eventually be sold at a fraction of their current prices.

A spokesman for the National Pharmaceutical Association, which represents Britain's 8,000 independent chemists, claimed the action could put 2,000 chemists out of business.

The OFT's action comes after a three-year campaign by the supermarket group Asda, which has described the price fixing as "a health tax on every man, woman and child in this country".

Over-the-counter healthcare products are the only category of goods still exempt from the Resale Prices Act, which prohibits suppliers from setting minimum retail prices.

The exemption was granted in 1970 when a court decided that without resale price maintenance (RPM), small chemists' shops would be driven out of business.

The OFT said it would ask the Restrictive Practices Court to end the exemption as it was no longer in the public interest. The court proceedings are likely to take at least 18 months.

The OFT's director-general, John Bridgeman, said the number of chemists' shops was no longer declining, and the main reason customers now visited them was to obtain prescriptions rather than to buy proprietary brands.

Last month an independent retail research group, Verdict, published a report which concluded that there were too many chemists in Britain and that 2,000 needed to be "culled".

According to Asda, consumers pay £300 million a year more than necessary for branded over-the-counter drugs.

But John D'Arcy, the director of the National Pharmaceutical Association, said the money ensured consumers had access to chemists. "Pharmacists rely on profits from over-the-counter drugs. If RPM ends, pharmacists will be forced to close. We need a diverse and comprehensive pharmacy service." He accused the OFT of "being driven by Asda".

The National Pharmaceutical Association, with chemist chains including Boots and Unichem and drugs manufacturers, has formed an action group to fight any change to price fixing. It claims the backing of 94 per cent of Labour MPs and has said it will take its fight to the courts.

In 1995 Asda unilaterally slashed the price of Anadin and a range of vitamins but was forced to restore them when the manufacturers won court injunctions.

It has since launched its own healthcare products which substantially undercut their branded counterparts.

● The health minister, Alan Milburn, announced tough new rules to crack down on prescription fraud estimated to cost the National Health Service more than £100 million a year. Measures will include legislation to make it a criminal offence falsely to claim exemption from charges.

Getting a grip on things . . . Chris Lindup, the headmaster of Merrywood secondary school in Bristol which finished near the bottom of the exam league tables, has introduced a new course — for both pupils and staff — to help elevate the school. Juggling is said to increase self-confidence and improve performances PHOTO: CHRIS ISON

Labour revolt on private schools plan

John Carvel

TONY BLAIR was last week facing a mutiny of Labour council chiefs after the Government announced plans to let private businesses take over the management of state education in deprived areas.

Senior officials disclosed that dozens of private firms were queueing for contracts in the first "education action zones", where schools will be allowed to tear up the normal rules governing the curriculum and teachers' pay.

Local authority leaders who thought they were going to have control of the zones, which were included in the education bill published last month, were furious when the fine print of the proposals emerged last week at the North of England education conference in Bradford.

"This could be the beginning of the privatisation of the education system. It could lead to the break-up of education authorities. It could lead to the destruction of local democracy," said Graham Lane, Labour education chairman of the Local Government Association.

The row threatens to damage Labour unity in the run-up to council elections in May, which will be the first test in the polling booths of the Government's popularity.

The association sent a letter to Mr Blair accusing the Government of reneging on a code of conduct signed last month by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, promising full consultation on policies affecting local government.

Mr Lane said he was seeking an urgent meeting with the Education Secretary, David Blunkett, to demand withdrawal of "totally unacceptable" proposals pending further talks with councils, school governors and teacher unions.

The blueprint for the zones was outlined by Michael Barber, Mr Blunkett's senior policy adviser. He invited bids for the first 25 zones — clusters of about 20 schools which will get £500,000 a year extra for three to five years to devise innovative ways of improving educational standards. Half the money will come from the Government and the rest from local businesses.

The first five zones, due to come into operation in September, would include at least one where a contract to manage the schools was given to a private business, Prof Barber said.

● Primary schools will be allowed to drop most of their lessons in history, geography, art, music and physical education as part of a radical plan to concentrate effort on the basics of literacy and numeracy. Mr Blunkett is expected to announce that schools should refocus their energies on delivering a core curriculum of English, maths, science and information technology.

Minorities face jobs bias from leading firms

Seumas Milne

WHITE graduates are almost twice as likely to be offered jobs by top British companies as their black and Asian counterparts, according to an exhaustive study of corporate graduate selection procedures published last week.

Ethnic minority graduates were significantly more likely than whites to be knocked back at two of the three main selection hurdles set by large employers: the initial sifting of application forms and the final "assessment centre" stage.

The findings, based on a study of 56,000 applications to 11 companies, were presented to a British Psychological Society conference by Susan Scott of the Commission for Racial Equality and Richard Kwiatkowski of East London university.

Concern has often been expressed about race discrimination at the interview stage, but the researchers found this stage to be the one in which black and Asian applicants were least disadvantaged. The biggest gap between the success rates of white and ethnic minority candidates was recorded at the final stage of the selection process.

Overall, white applicants were found to be 1.74 times more likely to be offered a job than the 6,500 black and Asian candidates in the sample, even though all the companies said they were committed to equal opportunity employment practices.

There were also sharp variations between the ethnic minority groups. Those of Bangladeshi and Afro-Caribbean origin were the most disadvantaged, while those whose families came from India outperformed whites until the final assessment stage.

This stage, required by most large companies, involves candidates doing a series of tests and exercises over one or two days.

The researchers described the differences as disturbing, though they discounted "deliberate direct discrimination", arguing that other "interpersonal factors" might be leading to indirect discrimination.

Mr Kwiatkowski said: "These are the best employers, who have co-operated with the study. One hates to think what is happening at the other end of the scale."

These results reflect a wealth of other evidence of discrimination suffered by black and Asian workers. The most recent figures drawn up by the TUC from the official Labour Force Survey show the unemployment rate among black workers to be nearly 19 per cent, compared with 7 per cent among white workers.

Crime 'crisis' based on myth

Alan Travis

PUBLIC ignorance about law and order is widespread and lies at the heart of a crisis of confidence in Britain's courts and judges, according to a Home Office study published last week.

The authoritative British Crime Survey (BCS) says that politicians have been wrong to "play to the gallery" by basing their criminal justice policies during the 1990s on jailing more and more people to feed the public's mistaken appetite for tougher punishments.

"These findings should warn politicians away from populist responses to crime. They show that a populist sentencing policy will not actually achieve much in the long run. It will not actually change public perceptions," said the report's co-author, Professor Michael Hough.

The key findings from the BCS's Attitudes to Punishment study show that, despite more than five years of "prison works" and "get tough" policies from the former Conservative Home Secretary, Michael Howard, there still exists a crisis of public confidence in the courts that needs tackling urgently.

The study discloses for the first time the scale of public ignorance on this issue. It says the majority of the public is wrong to believe that recorded crime is rising dramatically, that a large proportion of crime is violent, and that judges are handing out sentences which are far too lenient.

The BCS study, based on interviews with more than 16,000 people in 1996, shows that the public seriously underestimates just how severe the courts are when it comes to sending people to prison. It says this ignorance of crime and sentencing is contributing to widespread public cynicism about law and order. The problem is compounded by the absence of easily accessible figures showing the "going rate" for any particular crime.

"Those who were most likely to underestimate the courts' use of imprisonment had lower educational attainment than others, were likely to be older and were more likely to read the tabloid newspapers," says the survey. "Women were more likely than men to underestimate the proportion of convicted rapists sent to prison, and owner-occupiers more likely than others to underestimate the use of imprisonment for burglars."

The study blames the media for such a large public misunderstanding of what goes on in the courts.

"News values mitigate against balanced coverage," it says. "Erratic court sentences make news; sensible ones do not. As a result large parts of the population are exposed to a steady stream of misleading stories about sentencing incompetence."

However, the authors of the survey say part of the solution lies in the hands of the judges and the rest of the criminal justice system.

They say that the public has a very jaundiced view of judges, with more than a third believing they do a poor job. This compares with much higher levels of confidence in the police, the prison service and magistrates.

Law and order: facts and fiction

- **Recorded crime has fallen by 8 per cent in recent years. Some 75 per cent of people think it is going up.**
- **Only 6 per cent of crimes are violent or sexual. Most people think violent crime accounts for more than one-third of all crimes.**
- **The murder rate is going down. There were 681 homicides in 1996 — 10 per cent fewer than in 1995.**
- **Convicted criminals are increasingly likely to be jailed: 79,100 were imprisoned in 1995, compared with 58,400 in 1993.**
- **Serious offenders are jailed. More than 90 per cent of convicted robbers and 97 per cent of rapists go to to prison.**
- **Young children are no more likely to be killed by a stranger than they were in the past. Seven children a year have been killed over the past 20 years.**
- **Women are three times less likely than men to be attacked by a stranger.**
- **The elderly are at less risk from violent crime than the young. Under-29s are 13 times more likely to be mugged than pensioners.**

Therapists 'plant false memories in patients'

Rory Carroll

PSYCHIATRISTS have launched a fierce attack on colleagues who use bogus techniques to plant false memories of sexual abuse in patients, according to an unpublished report which was delayed for more than a year because therapists feared its criticisms.

A copy obtained by the Guardian shows that the inquiry, commissioned by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, has concluded that any memory recovered through hypnosis, dream interpretation or regression therapy is almost certainly false.

It blames these "dangerous and powerful tools for persuasion" for spawning hundreds of false accusations against parents, destroying families and undermining the credibility of genuine abuse victims.

Mistaken diagnoses have made patients more likely to feel suicidal and to engage in self-mutilation.

Sydney Brandon, chairman of the report's working party, said the General Medical Council should respond to complaints from patients by striking off psychiatrists who persist in using the techniques.

The report's key finding is that people do not bury memories of abuse. On the contrary, their problem is that they cannot forget.

"Despite widespread clinical and popular belief that memories can be 'blocked out' by the mind, no empirical evidence exists to support either repression or dissociation," the report says.

False memories tend to date the abuse from an earlier age than genuine cases, often when the person was an infant.

A book regarded as seminal by some mental health professionals, The Courage To Heal, is branded "irresponsible" for attributing almost all adult psychiatric problems to forgotten sexual abuse.

Therapists are also criticised for using all-embracing symptom checklists — such as headaches, celibacy, promiscuity and wearing baggy clothes — that exclude few people.

Entitled Recovered Memories Of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Implications For Clinical Practice, the original report was submitted to the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the summer of 1996.

Its hard-hitting findings appalled some Royal College members, who lobbied for it to be disowned. A compromise was agreed whereby watered-down guidelines were issued last October, but the report itself would no longer be published under the imprimatur of the College. Dr R E Kendall, the College president, confirmed that a revised version will appear as an article in the British Journal of Psychiatry in April.

Suharto's regime is on the line

THE PRESIDENT of the world's most powerful nation phones the president of East Asia's second most populous state and tells him to get things straightened out — and do it fast. This could be the most significant telephone call of the year. Ex-general Suharto has enjoyed decades of immense indulgence, yet times have now changed. Indonesia was an essential player in the Asian cold war and Suharto brought it over to the Western side. He shrugged off complaints, from the bloodbath of 1966 which lubricated his rise to power, via more bloodshed in East Timor, to growing unhappiness at his blatant nepotism which mocked the requirements of global economics. He tried it on again after the first International Monetary Fund bail-out last October, backtracking over promises of reform. But this time Indonesia is not alone.

The bursting bubble of the Asian "economic miracle" has given a wider dimension to Indonesia's crisis. President Clinton's spokesman explained that the urgent telephone call was needed because of "the importance of Indonesia to the region and to the US". In the past that was a reason for talking softly with Suharto: now it requires the reverse. Other limping Asian tigers are consenting to radical surgery: to allow Jakarta to go its own way would bring down the whole shaky structure. Indonesia presents one of the biggest question marks of the new year. Will the pent-up internal pressure for political change finally combine with external pressures to break the Suharto mould?

The question will not be postponed for long. Amazing as it may seem, Suharto has been planning, at the age of 76, to seek re-election in March for his seventh successive term of presidential office. But last week's panic has created a new mood in which this agenda can no longer be taken for granted. Megawati Sukarnoputri (daughter of President Sukarno — ousted by Suharto) has broken her cautious silence to offer herself as a candidate. Last weekend Suharto's clique seemed to some observers to put out feelers for a deal, with speculation that he might go in return for assurances that his greedy sons and daughters would be exempt from prosecution.

Suharto has made a habit of outlasting the sceptics, not least because of the economic boom which, however unsound its foundations, has led to rapid economic growth and a significant though uneven rise in living standards. This time there are new danger signals. The panic buying of staples such as rice is one pointer. These are mostly domestic products that should be relatively unaffected by devaluation of the rupiah, yet supermarket shelves were stripped and the government has been forced to control prices and arrange for exceptional imports. Another sign is the mounting anxiety of the Chinese business class. The tactical alliance Suharto formed with the most wealthy Chinese, even though he occasionally condoned anti-Chinese rhetoric, could quickly come under pressure if there were popular unrest. The memory of the 1966 witch-hunt against the left which was extended against the Chinese minority, is still vivid. Every family has heard tales of bodies floating in the rivers. It would not take much to provoke another disastrous exodus.

There is, however, still a strong possibility that Suharto will hang on regardless. The dominance of his corrupt oligopoly, argue the sceptics, means that it will not go quietly. Even if he himself wishes to step down, his wishes will be opposed by cronies and relatives who will defend to the end their privileges. The IMF has targeted a structure of cartels, tariffs and subsidies that is essential to their well-being. But as Keith Richburg of the Washington Post reports, "in almost every sector with heavy government control or where a monopoly is granted, there is a Suharto offspring or a closely connected friend of the first family".

Unless Suharto goes of his own free will, only two forces can push him out. One is a determination within the armed forces to do to him what he did to others in 1965-66. There have been statements from former officers calling on him to go, but little evidence so far of strong support among serving officers. A younger, more critical generation is emerging, yet it lacks a strong alternative candidate. The second force could be a groundswell of popular pressure from below — which means from within the majority Muslim community. Here too there is a lack of a clear challenging force. The two main organisations, of almost equal strength and representing nearly 60 million of the population, find it hard to co-operate. Amien Rais of the Muhammadiyah has called for unity and put himself forward as a presidential candidate, and could rally significant support. But he faces suspicions from Abdurrahman Wahid, heading the Nahdlatul Ulama, who fears, with some reason, that united action on a large scale might provoke the armed forces to rally around Suharto or set up their own junta.

Suharto's marginalisation of these popular forces may still prove his biggest mistake. The question then is not when he goes, but whether he does so voluntarily or only after his country has been plunged into new disaster. Western leaders proffering advice by telephone should leave no doubt. Indonesia cannot afford more Suhartoism — neither can Asia and perhaps the world. It is time — more than time — for him to go.

A much-needed start in Algeria

ALGERIA has reached a critical mass of tragedy where — at long last — the outside world is compelled to pay attention. The new European Union initiative is a much-needed start. And the Algerian regime itself has begun to realise that failure to prevent bloodshed on a huge scale must weaken its objections to foreign "interference". As Bosnia has shown, sovereignty is no longer an absolute bar to foreign concern where human rights are violated, and standing idly by has become less acceptable. How the international community should act is much more difficult to decide, but act it must.

The EU could have resolved to act a year ago, when there was also a dramatic escalation of violence during Ramadan. But a country where foreign TV crews do not dare to venture enjoys a degree of immunity from foreign concern. Nor does Algeria sit astride European lines of communication where it cannot be ignored. The fact that it sits on top of large oil reserves has had the opposite effect, of dissuading some foreign governments from questioning too closely the behaviour of Algeria's military-dominated regime. The decision of that regime five years ago to thwart an Islamist victory in the general election should have been firmly condemned. It has been argued that the decision was justified because such a victory would have resulted in a repressive new regime — particularly in its attitude to women. Whether this is a sufficient ground for interfering with a people's democratic choice is debatable. In practice, the outcome could hardly have been worse than the consequences so far in which at least 65,000 people — including large numbers of innocent women and children — have been killed, and thousands of families have been destroyed.

The question is how to translate intentions into specifics, particularly when initiatives may be unacceptable to the government. There is a clear need for direct aid for the victims and their families if NGOs can be found with sufficient brave volunteers to provide it on the spot. The regime appears willing to accept a United Nations rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, as urged by the UN Human Rights High Commissioner, Mary Robinson, last month. It has also agreed to let the EU send an advisory mission to explore ways of stopping the bloodshed — a mission that remarkably has been applauded by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

These are welcome steps, but they are unlikely to dispel the obscurity that surrounds these massacres. New claims of dark government involvement have been levelled, which it is in the interests of the Algiers government to see properly examined. Until this is resolved, no attempt to tackle the underlying political causes will be successful. The suspicion that forces within the government prefer to encourage a perpetuation of the violence rather than seek accommodation with the more moderate Islamists can only encourage further extremism.

The EU's concern should be calmly, but strongly, expressed. France's willingness to support the German initiative, now taken up by Britain as EU president, is a useful signal — so long as it is not undercut later by contradictory statements from Paris. United States concern is useful but needs to be conveyed with more vigour. The US state department has argued laboriously that oil and gas sanctions against Algiers would "not necessarily be in our interests". On the contrary, the threat to consider them may have more effect than mere exhortations on the Algerian government to "do more to protect its civilians". It should be doing more — but that is part of the problem.

The real truth about paedophiles – and us

Decca Aitkenhead

IT'S NOT easy these days to adopt a position so offensive that society is tempted to force you to keep it to yourself. Professors have been allowed to teach students racist theories; homophobic views, though perhaps thought unfortunate, are not unspeakable. But it came as no surprise that a British television documentary broadcast on Channel 4 last week provoked considerable condemnation. It was, said one pressure group, "morally indefensible" to provide a "platform" for the interviewees and their "propaganda". The programme was called The Devil Among Us. The interviewees were paedophiles.

Most people who watched it will have found what the men had to say deeply troubling. One believed that, "For a child, the ultimate sexual thrill would be to play naked and be photographed or videod . . . It does the child an awful lot of good." Another, in his 50s, saw no reason why an eight-year-old boy might not want to have sex with him; after all, he reasoned, he had a "kind personality". A convicted sex offender affected to see no reasonable objection to his running "safe houses" for "vulnerable" child prostitutes.

In the week of publication of the report on Mark Trotter, a paedophile allowed to continue working with children in an inner London borough despite repeated complaints, the TV documentary was genuinely shocking. The case for banning it, however, was thin. There seems very little reason to fear that the watching public will have listened to the paedophiles on the telly, turned to each other, and said, "You must admit they've got a point." A less persuasive collection of dysfunctional casualties would be hard to imagine. And viewers who share their sexual desires will already have engaged in their own elaborate process of self-justification — or downloaded it from the like-minded off the Internet.

'We have exhausted the repertoire of people considered legitimate targets'

In contrast, the programme makers' argument — that in order to tackle paedophilia, we must first understand the psychology behind it — seemed fair enough.

But the other psychology we seldom if ever examine is that of the public's response to paedophiles. I have friends who are friends with muggers, will share a joke with a crack dealer, and go drinking with men who get drunk and cut up their girlfriends. Their take on parenting is frankly negligent.

But mention paedophiles to them, and they're under the bed hunting for baseball bats, thundering the language of moral outrage. There is no mystery in why they find the idea of men wanting to have sex with children abominable. It is, however, worth wondering how paedophiles alone have come to haunt our communal imagination and motivate such unparalleled rage.

There are some obvious and unproblematic explanations. We know more about the prevalence of paedophiles than we used to, and have been told that they remain a menace for life. Alarming uses of the Internet are well reported, and newspapers have done their bit to expose paedophile rings. Parents who discover their neighbour has a conviction, even one 30 years old, are — in this context — understandably afraid.

But what motivates Tony Shepherd, the ex-soldier in the documentary who received a prison sentence for a quasi-military campaign of violence and intimidation against a local paedophile? Had he not been caught, he and friends had planned to kidnap their target and take him to a forest, where he'd be "taught a lesson". They'd planned to "nail him to a tree". The paedophile's father was also a "legitimate target", for allowing his son to live with him. Mr Shepherd said he had "strong views" about sex offenders — but it seemed quite obvious that what Mr Shepherd really had strong views about was the possibility of honourably hating someone.

"We've exhausted the repertoire of people we can consider legitimate targets," observes cultural historian Richard Webster. "There used to be Jews and homosexuals, but what do we have left? We've even lost communists, when they went and pulled the Berlin Wall down, which was a disaster for paedophiles. They're the ones left to hate." If paedophiles didn't exist, society would presumably find another group to satisfy the needs of righteous hate.

But if you ask people about their violent fury toward paedophiles, they tell you to look at the figures. Child abuse is everywhere! Fearful fury is the natural and proper emotion of parenthood. But we have always known about paedophiles, and our parents' parents will have warned them not to take sweets from strangers. The new discovery is the scale of child abuse going on in the home, yet the new panic is about the stranger in the park.

A Bournemouth newspaper editor explained his campaign against a local sex offender to me by saying, "This isn't someone who did something with one of his own family. He assaulted three little boys in a tent." Abuse within our families is just too difficult to confront, and so we invest heavily in the menace of the stranger. This may be the natural emotion of parenthood — but it is hardly the proper one, and certainly not the effective one for protecting our children.

There is a third and disturbing possibility fuelling our hysteria about paedophiles. In Dan Jacobson's book about the Bible, he wrote of the Old Testament prophets: "The conviction that one is speaking on the side of virtue can license an indulgence in fantasies that virtue itself would ordinarily compel one to forswear." When people tell you just what they'd like to do if they ever got their hands on a child molester, you sometimes see something verging on arousal.

If we are going to address paedophilia in any meaningful sense, it will involve confronting not just the strange man in the park, but ourselves.

France's disaffected youth vent their anger

Danielle Rouard tests the mood of young jobless people in Strasbourg



A burnt-out car in Saint-Etienne, one of the many French towns where cars have been torched recently by youths protesting over living conditions and lack of employment opportunities

FOUR youngsters are sitting on a bench in Strasbourg's Hautepierre district. "How can we tell you're a reporter?" the chubbiest one says with a mocking smile. I show my press card. "Is it true we did better than in Neuhof?" asks the eldest boy. Neuhof is another sensitive area — on the outskirts of Strasbourg — "where the police don't dare go any more". Their faces light up. "It's different in Hautepierre, where the riot police and anti-crime brigades have been bugging us since November. Some days we get up to six identity checks."

Thirty cars were burnt in Hautepierre. The weediest of the four, who is wearing a baseball cap back to front, nudges the eldest: "It was really serious, wasn't it? At 10pm on New Year's Eve the place was as bright as daylight," he remembers proudly. "It'd be great if it was like that every day."

His three mates hang their heads and say nothing. The youngest says: "No need to break a window. You just kick in the door, set fire to the car and scarper." Some people living in these small blocks of flats were taken in for questioning, but "they were all released".

In the previous few months there had been nights when the occasional car was torched. From November on, however, tension grew. "We told adults round here we were going to burn the whole lot on New Year's Eve," one said. On New Year's Eve and the days that followed, groups of young people did indeed set fire to a few cars — but "not parents' or friends' cars".

Their victims, often people who had not finished paying for their cars, included a few neighbours "who in the past called in the cops just to get us into trouble". But most of the time "we did it for no particular reason, just for kicks."

Some fathers claim that "kids over 18 egg on the youngsters, who don't face the risk of going to jail". That version of events is contested by teenagers who have attained their majority: "They're just plain stupid at 12, 14 or 16. They want to prove they're grown up. Our elder brothers used to beat us up if we did something silly. But what's the point of hitting this lot? They live as though they were on telly — not in real life but in a film."

Ten years ago there was a flare-up of violence in Hautepierre. Then things calmed down. Young people had a good time: for 10 francs ($2) they could go dancing at raves organised by social workers. A dance hall called Café Musique was opened down the road from Hautepierre's Cultural Centre, but it had to close down last April. "A gang of 15 guys got on the wrong side of the café managers and started going in without paying and making a fuss because there wasn't enough rap. They used anything as an excuse." Since then there has been no music and no meeting place except the streets.

"Many young people observe Ramadan," says an 18-year-old *beur*, a second-generation North African, who is a student at a technical school. "I may have got into trouble, but I'm not a delinquent. I've grown out of it, calmed down." On New Year's Eve he went dancing at the Big Party Two, an event that was organised at great expense by the local authorities.

The poster for the event, designed by local youngsters with advice from professionals, announced there would be techno, funk, rap and R&B — justification perhaps for the 80 francs entrance fee paid by the 3,000 who turned up.

"A lot of people couldn't afford it," says a 21-year-old secretary of Algerian origin. "I took me 10 months of sheer sweat to find a job. Companies don't like Arabs much. At a stretch I can understand the way the youngsters behaved — they're stone broke. So they celebrated New Year's Eve in their own way."

That evening she was with friends when she heard a loud explosion. "It was the gym — that was something I really couldn't understand." Many local youths used to work out at the gym. People have come up with all sorts of explanations for the bomb attack. Some see it as the work of Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right National Front; others blame Muslim fundamentalists.

Two-thirds of Hautepierre's population of 15,000 are of North African origin. Walls near the gym were covered with meticulously written slogans such as "Algeria screwed France in 1962; it'll do it again" and "Should France exist?"

Youngsters say: "What we have here in Hautepierre is a modern Islam, and we have no desire to go to Algeria, which we don't know anyway — we're French." They think the slogans were written by isolated *agents provocateurs*. They miss their gym: "That bomb was damned stupid."

You get the same kind of answer from leaders of the Muslim community in Neuhof. They criticise an atmosphere of growing permissiveness and the intervention of social workers, "who stop us beating the hell out of a kid who's done something stupid. The family has to remain strong."

Since the beginning of the year several people have been arrested in Neuhof, including a young Gypsy who allegedly set fire to a dozen cars. His clan lives on the Aviateurs housing estate, a traditionally violent area. There are bullet marks on several walls, including those of a nursery school that opened in 1995.

A former company director is sickened by it all: "I voted for Mitterrand in 1981. I now vote for Le Pen. I'm fed up with the constant hypocrisy of the city council. The young people who burn cars are doomed. I don't like to say so, but the only solution is to crush them."

In the heat of the moment, Strasbourg magistrates have chosen to crack down hard. Two cousins of Alsatian origin were given two-year prison sentences, and an 18-year-old girl who broke a car window so two minors could try — unsuccessfully — to set fire to the vehicle got eight months. She had never been in trouble before. Her accomplices will appear before a juvenile court.

Of the 31 young people arrested by police since December 31 only four come from immigrant families, which shows that the situation in Strasbourg is not as black-and-white as some would have us believe.

(January 8)

Unanswered questions on Israel's left

COMMENT
Patrice Claude

A GUESSING game doing the rounds in Tel Aviv goes something like this: Who is "rather against" the creation of an independent Palestinian state and "rather in favour of" a continuing Israeli presence on the Syrian Golan Heights; refused to vote in favour of the "Oslo 2" Israeli-Palestinian accords of September 1995; backed a last-minute tightening up of the law in early December allowing Israel to annex the Arab East Jerusalem; is "opposed" to the breaking up of Jewish settlements; does not envisage giving back more than half the occupied territories to the Palestinians; and wants to form "a government of national unity" with the ruling Likud and almost all the parties of the right?

Here's a hint: he's an ambitious and solitary former commando with a very high opinion of himself who is facing a nascent rebellion within his own ranks. Everyone knows the answer: Ehud Barak, leader of the opposition Labour party.

Ze'ev Chafets, a leader writer on the liberal magazine The Jerusalem Report regrets that, three years after bursting on to the political scene, the ex-general who sees himself as Yitzhak Rabin's heir has not made one interesting speech or come up with one original idea.

That depressing verdict is almost unanimously shared, even by Palestinians. Sources close to Yasser Arafat hint sadly that "nothing can be expected from Barak". Labour party members, 57 per cent of whom elected him leader seven months ago, seem disappointed, even distraught. The party's left wing and "peace now" activists feel they have been duped.

Last month, 3,000 delegates from around the country attended the national Labour convention in Tel Aviv to listen to their new leader and debate his policies. Barak, by then convinced that his former subordinate in the special commandos — Lieutenant Binyamin (Bibi) Netanyahu — would not survive as prime minister till the end of his term in 2000, wanted to put his party on an election footing in case an early poll was called this year.

When he entered the congress hall, the applause that greeted him was no more than polite. But when Shimon Peres, who has never won a single general election, walked in he received a standing ovation.

What is going on in the Labour party? "A post-electoral identity crisis," suggests Shlomo Ben-Ami, one of its brightest up-and-coming stars. "Maybe, but combined with a leadership crisis," says Haggai Merom, leader of the party's left wing.

Last June Barak refused to allow Peres to take up the honorary post of party president because he rightly feared that at 74 the "grand old man" would lead an internal opposition faction. Peres now seems more energetic and combative than ever. That only makes his successor look all the more colourless.

At the convention Peres lashed out at Barak. The Syrian president, Hafez al-Assad, "sincerely wants peace", Peres claimed, saying that peace would never come if Israel "returned only part of the Golan Heights". More surprising was his assertion that "the Palestinians need a state".

Publicly wrongfooted, Barak, the so-called brilliant strategist, spent the next few days trying to distance himself from Peres's sally. But Peres had hit a nerve. That day less than 15 per cent of those present voted in favour of Barak's proposal to create the post of director-general of the party.



Barak: seen as a Bibi clone

Worse, his plan to make national service compulsory for Palestinian Israelis, who are never called up, and for the ultra-Orthodox "young men in black", who almost always get out of it, never even came to a vote. Several prominent party members said that what they wanted was a policy genuinely different from Likud's, rather than "gimmicks".

Barak is convinced that the Oslo accords and the Islamist bomb attacks that preceded and followed Rabin's killing shook Israeli politics to its foundations, and caused the electorate to lurch to the right.

So he embarked on a vigorous repositioning of his party towards the centre. This has shocked many Labour supporters. He has gone from being "Bibi-compatible", as many on the left described him six months ago, to being widely seen as a "Bibi clone".

Gone is the alliance with the progressive and anti-clerical Meretz, which in its manifesto dared to describe the emergence of an independent Palestinian state as "desirable".

Barak has begun poaching on the right's hunting grounds while carefully avoiding any ideological debate. He has mocked Netanyahu's "incompetence" and "opportunism", but has never launched a political attack on the government's decisions. He has never said a word about the way Israel unapologetically rules — "for security reasons" — over territories won by force, which are inhabited by 2.5 million Arabs.

Barak tries to exploit the unpopularity of Netanyahu the man rather than public dislike of his policies. Barak has a regular lead of between 2 and 6 per cent over Netanyahu in opinion polls. But there is always between a quarter and a third of don't-knows.

A recent article in the Jerusalem Post asked, referring to Rabin's assassination, "Two years later: where is the left. It's a Good question.

(January 9)

Martin Scorsese tells **Samuel Blumenfeld** about his early memories of film and his close-knit Italian family

Through cinema to a father's heart

IS YOUR book* describing a "personal journey through American movies" an autobiography or a history of American cinema?

I very soon realised I couldn't tell the story of Hollywood chronologically, since it began the day I saw my first movie in 1946. At least I knew where to start. So I talk about the Hollywood I know, which has nothing to do with the Hollywood of 1910-30. Though my journey begins in 1946, I go back in time to find out how movies had become what they were when I discovered them.

You stress the documentary dimension of films that left their mark on you, as when you say that Howard Hawks's Land Of The Pharaohs is a documentary about the Egypt of 2800 BC.

Thanks to Hawks's direction and Alexander Trauner's sets, I began to understand what the life of the Egyptians was like at the time and how proud they were of belonging to their religion. I'll always remember the scene where priests announce that the gods of Egypt are about to speak. Several hundred extras are massed along the banks of the Nile and yet we experience a very powerful private moment. And when the gods speak, they really speak. One suspects there are priests behind the statues, but that doesn't matter — it's their belief that is important.

Of course the whole plot of the movie is rather weak and typical of Hollywood in a negative sense, but at no time does Hawks look down on Egyptian culture. Land Of The Pharaohs is far from being historically accurate, but that's not the point — you finds yourself plunged into the Egypt of the Pharaohs and overcome by very strong feelings for individuals even though they are extremely remote from you.

I had often been put off by the way history was taught us at school. What did people of the past have to say to us? Not much to the kid I was. The whole thing was sadly lifeless and lacklustre. The sets of Land Of The Pharaohs changed all that.

In those days, working-class people couldn't afford to go to the theatre. It wasn't part of our culture, unlike the cinema. The first dramatic movie I remember seeing was Victor Saville's The Silver Chalice, a biblical pageant shot in colour, with extremely rudimentary sets. It all looked fake. Of course the film wasn't very good, and at the time I hadn't seen Nosferatu or Caligari. The only foreign movies I was familiar with were by Rossellini and De Sica. The first French film I saw was Les Enfants du Paradis — on TV.

I loved the idea of reading subtitles — they provided access to an unknown language. Watching Italian movies on TV with my parents and grandparents was a unique experience. The characters on the screen and the members of my family belonged to the same world, had the same culture and of course spoke the same language. They were simply separated by the Atlantic. When I saw Open City and especially Paisa, which is set in Sicily, I found I was watching my grandparents.

You compare the cinema auditorium to a church, and the film to an object of worship. Are your memories of films always linked to where you first saw them?

Yes. I perfectly remember where I first saw The Searchers. I could even tell you the date, the size of the screen and what state I was in when I came out of the cinema. What's more, I could give you the same information about almost all the movies I've seen. That's odd, because what I know about the cinema mostly comes from TV.

I saw Citizen Kane several times on TV, with a poor picture and wobbly sound, and yet I was struck by the power of the film. Because of commercial breaks it's more difficult to produce an impact like that nowadays. Constant interruptions lessen the effect of a movie and prevent one from concentrating. Of course there were commercial breaks in those days too, but fewer.

Things were calmer in the States in the fifties, which is why I like the period so much. But it was also a period of depression, when people withdrew into their shells. No one knew what was going on, and the first part of the cold war was a difficult experience for a child. It's odd how the hidden face of the fifties can be detected in certain movies, such as Aldrich's Kiss Me Deadly, Lang's The Big Heat and Minnelli's The Cobweb.

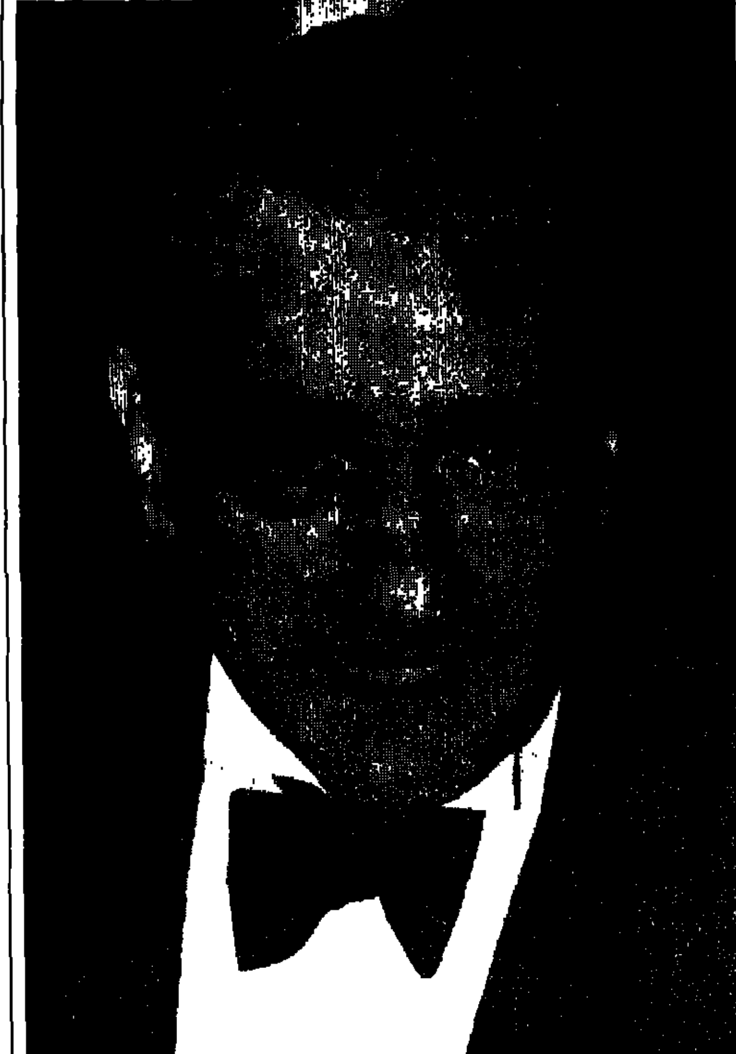
In your analysis of Edgar Ulmer's Detour, you write that "*film noir* showed how quickly an ordinary man could lose it all when he strayed from his path. Lured by the prospect of sinful pleasures, he ended up suffering hellish retribution". You say of John Cassavetes that he sought the truth and a form of redemption. Could your view of the history of the cinema be described as Christian?

Without any doubt, since I am a Christian. The ethics of people in my neighbourhood were very different from those of Americans. By neighbourhood, I mean the Sicilian village that had been transferred from the Mediterranean to downtown New York, and by Americans I mean all those who were neither Jews nor Italians.

It was a very tough area, but there was a strict code of honour, the slightest infringement of which was immediately punishable by death. We all lived in fear. There wasn't a contract hanging over our heads, but I was a kid, I hung around the streets, and I needed to use all my savvy to earn respect without resorting to violence. I saw my father behaving very cautiously with Mafia people. He had nothing to do with them, but he owed them the respect in which he was held, and it was difficult for him to obtain that without being obliged to kill someone.

The rules of the church were much less of a sweat. Church was a more reassuring place for an eight-year-old kid. I also liked being at home, with my parents and brother, and even if there were the dysfunctions you find in any other family, our ties remained very strong.

The cinema also reflected that — East Of Eden focuses entirely on love of the father. The reason I understood *film noir* so well was simply that it mirrored what I saw every day in the streets. I didn't rub shoulders with men who were doomed to live in hell, as in Detour, but I was familiar with the same kind of streets and lighting. All too often I met people who had lost all hope and whom I knew I wouldn't see again. Those were different times, very different from organised crime nowadays. It was a world with a feudal structure.



Scorsese: almost a total recall of movies PHOTOGRAPH RICHARD KENDALL

Do you identify strongly with certain films, like those of John Ford, whose vision of the family seems to reflect that of the family in which you grew up?

I was 13 when I first saw The Searchers. But it was only as I grew older that I realised that the Ethan Edwards character, played by John Wayne, had always been in love with his brother's wife. That's shown only glancingly, with a furtive close-up of her picking up a bundle of her clothes. At that point we understand what he now represents for the family. He has become a renegade, not in the legal sense but emotionally. He no longer truly belongs to the family. He'll come through OK, he's done what he needed to do, but he's no longer a full member of the clan.

Even in Fort Apache, there's a key scene where Henry Fonda, who plays Colonel Thursday, goes to Ward Bond's house to complain about his son, and Bond reminds him that he's in his home and therefore bound to respect certain proprieties. Yet he's speaking to his superior. Here we see family feelings taking precedence over everything else.

The most moving moment comes with the ball scene, where there's a great feeling of community. Colonel Thursday doesn't fit in, and the fact he has never experienced that kind of thing before is written all over his face.

And then there's that wonderful scene in How Green Was My Valley where the father goes into the house and his sons line up and meekly hand over their weekly earnings from the mine. It was the same in my family: each week my brother gave my father the money he'd earned.

Ford's movies were very close to us, even though he was Irish — and I say that because the Italians had a very hard time settling in the States, partly because several generations of Irish had already arrived there. The clash between Italians and Irish was all the more violent because the Italians found it hard to integrate — they didn't speak English.

Even today you'll find Italian Americans who have no desire to integrate — my grandparents, for example, never became American citizens. My family operated along tribal lines. The only thing that mattered were blood ties. Outside that circle, there was no question of trusting anyone else. When my grandfather died, the eldest of my father's seven or eight brothers and sisters took responsibility for the whole family. That involved looking after my grandmother and calling family meetings whenever there was a problem with one of the kids. He was the only person allowed to take decisions, even if they could be challenged.

What was the first film where you felt there was a clear parallel between what was happening on the screen and what you experienced in your neighbourhood?

Undoubtedly Kazan's On The Waterfront. It was the first time I saw actors of the calibre of Brando and Eva Marie Saint talking and moving like people in my neighbourhood. It came as a shock, as it was the first time I recognised myself on the screen.

I'm now much more interested in East Of Eden. It was shot in colour and in 'Scope and has greater visual qualities. I'm particularly struck by the fascinating story of a boy who yearns to be loved by his father. Because of me, my father became very strict — he was guided by strict principles about what a person should and should not do.

He spent a lot of time at work, came home to dinner, then went out to the local bar to play cards with his friends. The only moments I shared with him were in the cinema. As I also had my asthmatic attacks, we didn't talk much. The cinema was our main means of communication, and even then it was more about a shared experience than the reactions we exchanged.

To a certain extent, it was the same with my brother, especially the day we saw Hamlet with Laurence Olivier. I was six, and he 12. He knew nothing about Shakespeare, but he'd heard there was a ghost and some swordfights.

My mother didn't take me to the cinema much, except for King Vidor's Duel In The Sun. The movie had been condemned by the church and contained sex scenes — two good reasons to rush to see it.

But I often talked to my mother. My father was the more silent of the two, and I had to expend boundless ingenuity to find a way of approaching him. He was very caring and responsible, though: the moment I had the slightest health problem, he took me to the doctor's.

Why are directors like Jacques Tourneur, Anthony Mann, Phil Karlson, Samuel Fuller and Edgar Ulmer, whom you believe to be very important, so little known in the United States?

I think people in America are afraid to take film-makers like Mann and Fuller seriously. They mainly worked in genre cinema, which was considered degrading. How can one possibly not take Mann seriously? He made several Westerns with James Stewart that revolutionised the genre.

Mann and Fuller worked within a system that allowed them a certain freedom, though it meant they had to efface themselves to a certain extent. Though you've followed in their footsteps, you work very differently — when one of your movies is released, your name is given as much prominence as its title.

I arrived on the scene at a time when the cinema was becoming a more international and more self-reflexive art. Mann and Fuller were pure and innocent, whereas I have a much greater awareness of cinematic syntax. I'd have adored to work within the old Hollywood system, but by the time I started my career in the sixties it had collapsed.

I stand at the crossroads of several traditions — those of Welles, Cassavetes, Antonioni, Godard, Wajda, Kurosawa and Mizoguchi all rolled into one. To get a film project off the ground I need to show my face, attend Oscar ceremonies and never turn down an award, so people know I'm still keen to make movies and to raise the money I need to shoot them with.

*A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies, Faber and Faber (£20) (November 28)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Iran Leader Offers Olive Branch to U.S.

Barton Gellman

IRANIAN President Mohammad Khatami called last week for wide-ranging unofficial exchanges to break down the "bulky wall of mistrust between us and the U.S. administration," implying for the first time that an informal dialogue could lead to resumption of U.S.-Iranian diplomatic ties.

In an extraordinary televised interview after 18 years of unbroken public hostility, Khatami declared solidarity with the "essence of the American civilization" and expressed regret for the 1979 hostage-taking that began Iran's Islamic revolution. While strongly critical of U.S. governments, past and present, he said "there is no hostility between the two nations" and used a cautiously worded formula to suggest that "negotiations . . . based on mutual respect" could "lead to positive results" between the two governments.

Khatami's 45-minute interview with the Cable News Network, in which he spoke confidently and without visible recourse to notes, enlarged substantially on a December 14 news conference in which he expressed his hopes for a "thoughtful dialogue" with "the great people of the United States." Clinton administration officials with disparate views of dealing with Iran called the new overture historic.

In the interview, taped in his Tehran office, Khatami called for an immediate "exchange of professors, writers, scholars, artists, journalists and tourists." He twice averred that Iran has "no need for political ties with the United States," but appeared to describe a road map that might lead to those ties over time. New relations among intellectuals, he said, could "prepare for a change and create an opportunity to study a new situation."

A response drafted rapidly by national security adviser Samuel R. "Sandy" Berger and Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright included the Clinton administration's most unambiguous call thus far for the first face-to-face diplomatic talks since Islamic clerics overthrew Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1979. Previously, U.S. officials had tied any dialogue to conditions that the contacts be authorized by both governments and acknowledged in public.

The statement, issued by State Department spokesman James P. Rubin, simply said that "the way to address the issues between us is for our two governments to talk directly."

U.S. officials emphasized the importance of concrete changes of Iranian behavior but went out of their way to avoid declaring, as they commonly have in other contexts, that warm words were valueless in themselves.

"We will be in a position to judge what is significant based on actions, not words, but words often are the precursor to actions," Rubin said at his briefing before CNN's 6pm broadcast.

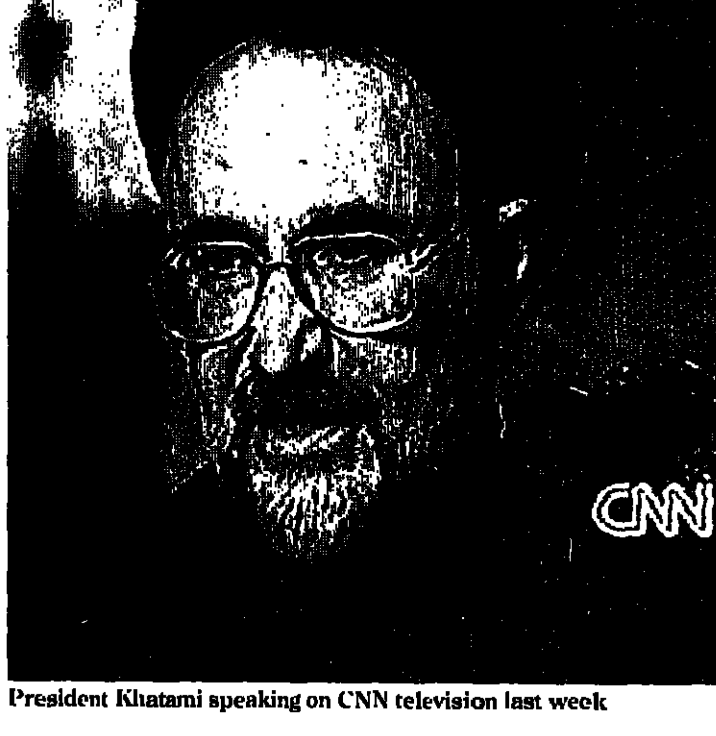
"I think it is historic and we do consider it historic," another State Department official said of Khatami's remarks. "I think there's significant interest in this town in moving forward."

Three vital questions — all fiercely debated in recent weeks by specialists in and out of the administration — remained unanswered by the interview, which was conducted in Farsi. Officials said they have no consensus yet on the extent of Khatami's apparent struggle with the fundamentalist clerics who have led Iran since 1979, on who is winning the struggle, or on what Khatami's motives may be for what nearly every analyst described as a remarkable overture to the United States.

Those who see a basic struggle of visions with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khameini, pointed to Khatami's lengthy discourse — "so that my remarks would not be taken as political nicety or a mere play on words" — on the virtues of American civilization as a model of religion and liberty and a "harbinger of independence struggles" for other peoples, including those in Iran.

"Not only do we not harbor any ill wishes for the American people, but in fact we consider them to be a great nation," Khatami said.

That vision of America comes in stunning contrast to the prevailing Iranian rhetoric, these last two decades, of "the Great Satan" and "the center of global arrogance" — the subjugator of other peoples, that is, and the principal source of evil in the world.



President Khatami speaking on CNN television last week

"We have simply not heard anything like this before," said one administration official associated with hard-line views toward Iran. "I frankly find it encouraging that he is doing this in public rather than try to do it in secret."

Skeptics, in and out of the administration, noted Khatami's repeated statements of allegiance to Khameini and his sharp attacks on U.S. administrations since Jimmy Carter's as "adventurers" bent on a "flawed policy of domination" who owe apologies to their own people and Iran.

The skeptics also pointed to Khatami's repetition of the formula that "supporting peoples who fight for the liberation of their land is not, in my opinion, supporting terrorism." The Clinton administration, like its predecessors, accuses Iran of material and ideological support for Islamic militants including Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah whose attacks on Israel commonly result in heavy civilian casualties. In his CNN interview, Khatami referred to Israel as a "racist terrorist regime."

The most critical disagreement among Clinton's advisers is whether Khatami intended his interview as a genuine overture to the United States or a wedge between it and its western allies. Some officials said they suspected it to be a form of rhetorical judo, aimed to project an air of moderation that would aggravate differences of view between the United States and the European Union.

"Whether this gesture is seriously meant to bring about diplomatic relations remains to be seen," said Mahnaz Afkhami, director of the Foundation for Iranian Studies, in remarks that echoed some of those made by administration officials on condition of anonymity. "My own idea is that this is more in terms of giving a more rational, moderate image of Iran, to strengthen Iran's ties with other potential partners — in the Arab world, in Europe and in Asia."

Boredom and Apathy Dog Freshmen

Rene Sanchez

COLLEGE freshmen in the United States sound more bored with school, less interested in politics or social issues, and just plain lazier than any class in a generation.

In a massive survey of their views, this year's freshmen are reporting record levels of academic and civic apathy and are continuing to embrace more conservative social values than college students from the last few decades. The survey, which has been conducted annually for the past 30 years, was released this week by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles.

It contains a variety of revelations: A record percentage of freshmen have parents who are divorced or separated. The number of students who smoke cigarettes regularly, 16 percent, is at its highest point since the survey began and has nearly doubled since the late 1980s. Student support for keeping abortion legal has sunk to its lowest point since 1979. And the number of freshmen who admit to frequently drinking alcohol is declining.

But survey researchers said they were struck most this time by a pattern of growing indifference among many students to their studies and to important issues in American society. A record number of freshmen, for example, said they had missed classes or appointments because they had overslept. The hours they say they spend on homework is declining. And record numbers of them also said they are frequently bored in classes.

More than 250,000 freshmen, nearly all of whom graduated from high school last year, took part in the survey. It was conducted last fall at 464 colleges and universities. Its size and scope are unrivaled, and its results have long been used to gauge how new college students view their lives and their futures.

The waning interest that freshmen have shown this decade in government and politics was evident again this year on the survey. Now, about 27 percent of them say that "keeping up to date with political affairs" is important. At the start of the decade, that percentage was above 40 percent. Social activism also seems to be less of a priority: The number of freshmen who say it's important to take personal steps to clean up the environment or to promote racial understanding continued a decline that began after 1992, when the survey found record levels of interest in those two issues.

The results of the survey are quite dismal about politics: Only about 17 percent of this year's college freshmen expressed interest in "influencing the political structure." And the percentage of freshmen who say they vote in student elections has plummeted from a high of 77 percent in 1968 to 21 percent now.

A record 26 percent of students said their parents either were divorced or not living together. That percentage is three times higher than it was when researchers first asked the question in 1972.

Sharing the Blame for Asian Crisis

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

TALES of South Korean corruption, Indonesian mismanagement and Thai chicanery are being advanced to explain Asia's suddenly stumbling economies. Most of the tales ring true and explain much. But they are not the whole story.

They do not explain this central reality: Asia's rolling financial crisis has been indiscriminate in its choice of victims. It has smashed the ambitions and treasury of an industrial democracy built by a disciplined and homogenous population (South Korea) as easily as it has leveled an oil-rich autocracy where social and racial tensions are rife (Indonesia).

The world's financial wizards are at work designing and revising condition-laden bailout packages for Asia based entirely on correcting Asian flaws. The wizards seem to think like Brutus rather than Cassius, finding fault in the stars and not on their own doorstep. But they should be asking if anything in the international financial system itself helped trigger this economic debacle.

The trigger for crisis in Asia, as in Mexico in 1994, was in fact external: Short-term dollar-denominated debt payments rolled due in massive amounts, and international banks and investors refused to extend new credit as it became clear that the debtor companies and governments did not have enough dollars to pay off everybody holding a chit.

The material causes of this pattern of destructive financial behavior are relatively easy to identify. Greedy Asian politicians and their cronies took advantage of the laziness of institutional investors and lenders abroad. The huge capital flows created in investors' minds a financial Asia that did not correspond to the realities of the countries into which the money was pouring. Asia became El Dorado. The World Bank blessed the image with a report four years ago on "The East Asian Economic Miracle" that lavishly praised the countries now under attack.

For years groupthink and herd investment encouraged money-center banks, pension fund managers and credit rating agencies in the United States, Japan and elsewhere to overlook the obvious signs of the corruption, mismanagement and chicanery among their borrowers.

It is now clear that many South Koreans, Thais and Indonesians took the money and ran. Their countrymen will have to pay for that through the austerity, unemployment and bankruptcies the IMF conditions for new credit will bring.

But the International Monetary Fund and the power that guides it in this crisis, the U.S. Treasury, risk building a whirlwind of resentment with their blinkered approach. Their recovery plans impose draconian local conditions on the Asian debtor nations, but demand no reforms in the patterns of international investment and lending that contributed to this crisis. The wizards must address directly the fault that lies with the international financial community, as well as belatedly telling the world about Asia's flaws.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Canadian Indians Receive Apology

Howard Schneider in Toronto

THE CANADIAN government last week apologized to the country's Indian, Inuit and other aboriginal people for decades of mistreatment, offering an emotional atonement for policies that tried to stamp out native culture and confined Indian children in often abusive government-run schools.

Following a drum and dance ceremony, and clutching a ceremonial feather, Jane Stewart, Canada's minister of Indian affairs and northern development, read an official "Statement of Reconciliation" that acknowledged the damage done to native populations beginning with the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century and running through modern efforts to suppress native religion and language.

The statement dealt in broad terms with an array of offenses, including the hanging of Louis Riel, leader of the French-Indian Metis people, who was executed by federal officials in 1885 for his role in a Saskatchewan uprising.

Stewart said she hoped the statement inaugurates a new relationship between Canada and its original residents, and pledged $250 million for a "healing fund" to specifically help those who suffered physical and mental abuse at the government-run schools. The schools were not closed until the 1970s, and left a legacy of emotional scars among generations of Indians who remember them as a place where they were secluded from their families, forbidden from speaking their language, and in the worst cases physically and sexually assaulted.

"As a country, we are burdened by past actions that resulted in weakening the identity of aboriginal peoples, suppressing their languages and cultures, and outlawing spiritual practices," Stewart said, reading from a statement inscribed on a scroll that was presented to representatives of Canada's five major Indian organizations.

"The government of Canada today formally expresses to all aboriginal people in Canada our profound regret for past actions of the federal government which have contributed to these difficult pages in the history of our relationship together."

Along with the healing fund, Stewart said the government will begin working with Indian leaders to develop health, counseling and economic development programs to address unemployment, teen suicide and other chronic social problems plaguing many native communities — what she dubbed a "spiritual poverty" linked to the government's suppressive policies.

For a variety of historic, economic and demographic reasons, native affairs have remained among Canada's most pressing domestic concerns and occupy a far higher profile than in the United States. Indians form a larger portion of the population than in the United States, and though the percentage is still small, they are the fastest-growing segment of Canadian society. In cities like Winnipeg, for example, Indians are a very visible minority.

Many provinces, most notably British Columbia, have ongoing treaty negotiations with Indian groups over basic questions of land title and access to resources that were not settled in the colonial era. The courts here have on several occasions recognized aboriginal rights to harvest the resources contained on their traditional lands — limiting what was assumed to be provincial jurisdiction over forests and fishing grounds, for example.

The statement of reconciliation, therefore, is not only an ethical expression of sorrow but also an acknowledgment that Canada still needs to resolve complicated questions about how to divide the wealth of the land between cultures.

After decades of legal battles, time-consuming talks and sometimes-violent protest by natives asserting traditional land claims, the statement is a step in the right direction, said Phil Fontaine, grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations, a coalition of Canada's dozens of distinct native bands.



Traffic stalls in Montreal last week. Rain and ice cut power to millions of people in Canada and New England PHOTO: MARTIN CHAMBERLAIN

"For the first time in history, this government has accepted that Canada cannot achieve its full potential" without the success of its native people, who form about 3 percent of the population but loom much larger in Canada's history and self-image, Fontaine said.

"This is and always has been our land, before the pharaohs constructed pyramids, or China's emperors built the Great Wall," the grand chief said. "Our knowledge of the world, our obligation to the creator, makes us unique among Canadians.

"This celebrates the beginning of a new era," Fontaine added. He said he expects serious efforts to provide native communities with access to the land, forest and other resources they need to sustain and govern themselves, and to protect their culture.

● Emergency crews in Canada and the United States continued battling an intense rain and ice storm last weekend that cut power to millions of people and contributed to the deaths of up to 20 people. The storm blanketed parts of northern New England, eastern Ontario, southern Quebec and Canada's maritime provinces under a two-inch coat of ice.

Though the precipitation was expected to stop last weekend, Canadian officials say it might be a week before power is fully restored to an estimated 900,000 homes and roads are cleared.

About 2,800 troops were deployed to Montreal and hundreds to Ottawa, bolstering exhausted utility and emergency workers. More than seven inches of rain and ice have fallen on southern Quebec and Ontario since the storm began, causing an estimated $700 million damage.

News in Brief

TERRY L. Nichols was spared the death penalty last week when federal jurors were unable to agree on whether the Oklahoma City bombing conspirator should pay for the crime with his life.

U.S. District Judge Richard P. Matsch dismissed the panel, which deliberated for 13 hours over two days before notifying him of the impasse, and said he will now assume responsibility for sentencing Nichols.

Matsch cannot by law sentence Nichols to death for his role in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in which 168 people were killed. The judge can, however, sentence Nichols to a maximum of life in prison without the possibility of release. He asked for recommendations from the prosecution and defense by February 9 and promised a decision after that.

After the jury left the courtroom, Nichols' lawyers shook his hand, hugged him and patted him on the back. Nichols registered little reaction. Clearly distraught victims of the bombing held hands and wept in court, while a few feet away, the Nichols family smiled and embraced.

Matsch said the jurors, who were empowered to make a binding sentencing recommendation, disagreed on the issue that was a legal threshold for deciding on the death penalty — whether Nichols intended people to die in the blast.

A CALIFORNIA single mother who has become a rallying point for a growing "fat acceptance" movement was convicted of misdemeanor child abuse last week in the death of her 680-pound, 13-year-old daughter whose heart failed because of obesity.

Marlene Corrigan, a 48-year-old federal worker from El Cerrito, north of Oakland, was acquitted of a more serious felony charge of child endangerment after a five-day nonjury trial before Contra Costa Superior Court Judge Richard C. Arnason. She faces up to a year in prison, but could have been given six years on the more serious charge.

Police reported finding Christina Corrigan 18 months ago lying nude on a mattress on the living room floor, surrounded by empty food cartons. They said her body was scarred with 100 deep bedsores from her torso to her feet and she had dried feces trapped in the folds of her flesh.

SETTLEMENT discussions have resumed in the sexual harassment case against President Clinton, but with Paula Jones asking for a reported $2 million and an apology, no out-of-court resolution appears imminent.

As Clinton prepares to testify under oath for the first time in the case, lawyers for Jones approached his legal team about finding an agreement that would avoid this month's closed-door deposition as well as the public trial scheduled for May, according to sources familiar with the talks.

In addition to the apology she has long demanded, Jones' lawyers presented a settlement proposal in the area of $2 million, a figure first reported last Sunday by CBS News. Such a payment by Clinton would be nearly three times the $700,000 Jones originally sought when she first filed her lawsuit in 1994 but would be in keeping with the $2 million that sources said her previous lawyers requested before withdrawing from the case in September.

Choosing Between Bad and Mad

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

IT IS no wonder that we stumble so often when we're forced to decide whether someone is bad or (also) mad. After all, we barely speak the same language.

The medical world talks about mental illness. But the law only talks about legal insanity. The public wonders whether some defendant is mad as a hatter. The judge only has to determine if a defendant is competent enough to stand trial.

This is how it goes now in the case of Theodore Kaczynski who appears to be both certifiably nuts and legally competent.

Was anyone really surprised when the mathematician-turned-hermit, the accused Unabomber, interrupted the trial before it even began to read something he had written, something "very important"? Was anyone truly surprised that he apparently protested in the judge's chambers against being represented by lawyers who want to portray him as mentally unstable?

Kaczynski did what he does best. He disrupted the system. If he is crazy, a former prosecutor told CNN outside the courthouse, then he is crazy like a fox. But this man spoke as if Kaczynski could not be both sick and smart, delusional and deliberate. A psychotic fox.

This is at the heart of the trial of a man who worried in his journals that society would see him as "a sickie" rather than a political philosopher. A man who has refused to see a psychiatrist, who has been found "competent" to stand trial according to that low legal standard and so is permitted to direct his own defense.

What does society do about a man who writes with clarity that "The technophiles are taking us all on an utterly reckless ride into the unknown." And then tells his lawyers that he believes satellites control people and place electrodes in their brains. A man who is accused of deliberately planning and building bombs that killed three and maimed 29. But says he was controlled by an all-powerful organization he couldn't resist.

Ever since John Hinckley shot Ronald Reagan and was sent to a mental hospital, insanity has become a hard defense to muster. As Michael Perlin of New York Law School says, "There is no question that jurors consistently reject the insanity defense in cases of people who were severely mentally ill and didn't know what they were doing."

It is raised only 1 percent of the time and successful one-quarter percent, and even then, almost always when both sides agree that the defendant is out of his mind. Today, Perlin says, "Society wants to try just about everyone."

The law holds people responsible for their actions while medicine tries to help those who are ill through no fault of their own. These two inexact sciences meet at the juncture where evil confronts illness. In a lock-'em-up era, we have come to believe that insanity is a loophole for evil, not a diagnosis for disease.

But the bizarre part of this story is that to declare Kaczynski evil and go for the death penalty, we have to accept Kaczynski's own view of reality.

We have to agree that the world he constructed over 20 years in a cabin in Montana is not the delusion of a paranoid schizophrenic, but the rational view of a political ideologue. Sending letter bombs was the rational act of an anti-technology terrorist, not a madman controlled by some omnipotent force.

Not only does Kaczynski insist he is sane, but here is the clincher: The law agrees. Having found him "competent," at least for now, he has won a degree of autonomy and power.

Indeed, as Northeastern University law professor Rose Zoltek-Jick says wonderingly, "He's dragged us down Alice's hole. It's as if he were forcing us to go into a world as crazy as his." This past week in Sacramento, the Mad Hatter has been running the show.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
January 18 1998

Battleground of Confusion

Charles Moskos on the folly of comparing race and gender in the Army

TO THE surprise of many, the Pentagon advisory committee on gender issues last month recommended that men and women recruits live in separate barracks and operate in sexually segregated platoons during basic training. The panel's attention was primarily on the Army, inasmuch as the Marine Corps has never trained the sexes together, the Navy has a form of semi-segregated training, and Air Force basic training is largely classroom education. The Army, moreover, is the service that has suffered most from sex scandals in training environments.

Yet, at the same time, it is the Army that is held up as a model for racial integration. During a televised town meeting in Akron last month, both President Clinton, a supporter of affirmative action, and Abigail Thernstrom, a writer who opposes racial preferences, pointed to the Army as one of the few success stories in black-white relations. Though the Army is by no means a racial utopia, nowhere else in American society has black achievement been so pronounced; it is one of the few places where whites are routinely bossed around by blacks.

If the Army has done so well in racial integration, why has it not succeeded as well with gender integration? The comparison of race and gender integration has become standard practice for advocates of bringing women into full participation in the armed forces, especially into combat units.

There are indeed similarities between race and gender equity in the Army. Both blacks and women are a minority of Army personnel (27 percent and 15 percent, respectively). Blacks served in segregated units until the early years of the Korean War; women served in all-female units in World War II and continued to do so until the mid-1970s. And, to be sure, some of the current arguments that gender integration undermines unit cohesion are similar to those used by opponents of racial desegregation in the late 1940s.

Perhaps even more telling, the road to the good race relations of today's Army has been a rocky one. The relatively smooth integration that occurred in the 1950s was followed by severe racial strife during the latter years of the Vietnam War and the early years of the all-volunteer force in the 1970s. Fights between blacks and whites were endemic, and on many military installations there were areas where members of the "wrong race" did not dare go. The race problem was so acute that the Army appeared to be on the verge of self-destruction. That realization set in motion steps to expand opportunities for black advancement, including an affirmative action program that tries to avoid the stigma of preferences by demanding that applicants meet existing standards.

But these apparent similarities must not obscure the fact that the situations of blacks and women in the military are not comparable. Let us start with the most obvious. Between the races, physiological differences are not an issue, but between the sexes they are. All the talk of how modern warfare is high-tech and push-button is off the mark. Ground combat in any setting involves the most physically demanding endurance imaginable. Even in the Persian Gulf War, where the media highlighted the efficacy of stand-off weapons, large numbers of men were involved in physically grueling armored assaults. And, not to be overlooked, much of the work involved in logistics often requires sheer muscle power as well.

ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTOPHE VORLET

Efforts to hold women to the same physical standards as men are deluded. Rather than trying to raise female standards to abnormal levels, or lower standards for men, much better to admit the differences and be done with it. It is worth noting that surveys show that women soldiers are quite realistic on this score: 84 percent do not favor requiring the same physical standards for men and women.

The question of personal modesty points to another fundamental difference between race and gender. Whereas privacy within same-sex groups is not an issue, some level of privacy between the sexes is a primary concern for virtually all military women (and many men, too). Nonchalant mixed-sex shower scenes in recent movies like G.I. Jane and Starship Troopers to the contrary, nearly all women and men said they prefer living apart during missions such as the ones the Army undertook in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia.

Efforts to hold women in the Army to the same physical standards as men are deluded

The military can be ruthless on racial discrimination, but "zero tolerance" for sexual harassment is a non-starter as there is no consensus — in either sex — on what constitutes petty harassment. One person's compliment may be another person's harassment. Likewise, whites usually do not fear mentoring blacks or vice versa, but a mentor relationship across the sexes can easily lead to innuendo and perceptions of sexual misconduct. This is because the chemistry of sexuality that operates between the sexes has no counterpart in relationships between heterosexuals of the same sex.

One other significant difference between race and gender integration must be mentioned. For blacks, the civil rights agenda is the same for both officers and enlisted personnel and for such organizations outside the military as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: equal opportunity for all ranks. There is not a comparable identity of views between women in the military and advocates of the feminist agenda.

Take the common assertion that the root cause of sexual harassment in the military derives from women not being allowed into the combat arms. This is so, the argument goes, because the resultant second-class status of female solders leads to their vulnerability to sexual harassment. Such a viewpoint does not correspond with that of enlisted women who make up some 85 percent of all female soldiers (half of the women are black). Rare is the enlisted woman who expresses a desire to enter the combat arms. But directly to the point, surveys show that only 2 percent of enlisted women believe sexual harassment would decrease if the combat arms were opened to women. In fact, 61 percent believe harassment would increase. (The rest thought it would not make much difference one way or the other.)

But if the proponents of putting women into combat units are at odds with enlisted women over the subject of sexual harassment, they are absolutely on target in another matter: Without women in the combat arms, there will never be a proportionate number of female generals. So, do we want more female generals or less sexual harassment? Just acknowledging this trade-off should help clear the air.

Even the staunchest traditionalist must admit that women bring special talents to the Army. As reported by a presidential commission, women soldiers tend to have higher aptitude scores, better work attitudes and fewer disciplinary problems than the men. The presence of women soldiers also was an important — if yet unrecognized — factor in the Army's exemplary performance in recent peacekeeping missions. It is now a matter of record that the behavior of American soldiers toward the local populace in Somalia was exemplary, compared with that of other armies, including Western ones. This welcome outcome was in no small part due to the Americans being the only mixed-gender force in Somalia. Female soldiers, that is, display a compassion found less frequently among men. Yet the very qualities that enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions can be a hindrance in combat, where the worst instincts in soldiers must be aroused.

The main argument for the integration of women in the armed forces must be the same as it was for blacks: Does it make for a more effective military? The bottom line is that blacks and whites are essentially interchangeable soldiers. But when physical differences and privacy concerns matter — and they do — men and women are not.

Charles Moskos is professor of sociology at Northwestern University. His most recent book (with John Sibley Butler) is All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way (Basic Books)

'2000 Bug' Hits Pocketbook Plastic

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

WASHINGTON'S Market Day grocery store, purveyors of truffles, Kalamata olives, arugula and other trendy provisions, has gotten picky about which of its customers can pay with a credit card. If your card has a couple of zeros in the wrong place, don't leave home without some greenbacks.

The numbers the store cares about, however, have nothing to do with a customer's credit limit. It's the year the card expires that matters. Newly issued Visa and MasterCard credit cards that have expiration dates in the year 2000 — embossed as "00" on the plastic — can't be processed by Market Day's cash registers.

Although still somewhat isolated, the credit card problem has begun to plague several other businesses in the Washington area and nationwide, and is providing a small but growing number of ordinary people with a rude — and early — introduction to the perils of the computer world's so-called year 2000 problem.

Many computer systems use a two-digit dating system that assumes 1 and 9 are the first two digits of the year. Without specialized reprogramming, those computers will think the year 2000 — or 00 — actually is 1900, a glitch that could cause many systems to go haywire. At Market Day, for instance, if a card expiring in "00" is swiped through the register's magnetic stripe reader, "it tells us it's expired," lamented Chris Cullina, the store's owner.

The year 2000 issue has long been viewed as a problem that won't strike with intensity until two years from now. And when it does, specialists had expected, the biggest effect will be on large systems, such as those that process payroll checks or store government records.

But the credit card glitch, experts say, shows that the date problem won't solely be a nail-biting event for computer specialists trying to rewrite programs. Average people who don't use computers and thousands of small business owners could be affected — and well before January 1, 2000.

"This has created a lot of headaches for merchants," said Cathy Hotka, vice president of information technology at the National Retail Federation, a trade association based in Washington. "Not everyone has been able to fix their systems, and that means problems for consumers."

Credit card companies contend that only a small percentage of stores cannot handle the new cards.

Visa International and MasterCard International in October started allowing their member banks, which actually issue the credit cards, to distribute cards that expire in 2000 and beyond. Both companies said they spent five years and millions of dollars to ensure that merchants could handle the new cards, replacing old card-reading terminals and conducting myriad spot checks around the globe.

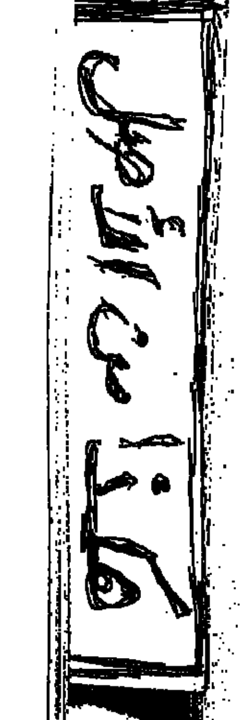
Visa estimates that 99 percent of the 14 million locations worldwide that accept its card can handle year 2000 expiration dates, said Scott J. Harrison, who is handling date-conversion issues for the company.

"We've done everything you can imagine," Harrison said. "We've mobilized the forces of our members' banks; we've produced hundreds of thousands of test cards; we've required member banks to report on the compliance status of merchants."

Harrison said Visa has from 300,000 to 400,000 year 2000 cards in circulation that are generating almost 3 million transactions a month.

But not every credit card company thinks merchants are fully ready. American Express Co. is still limiting cards to 1999 expiration dates and doesn't plan to release year 2000 ones until later this year. "Not all merchants are year 2000 compliant yet," an American Express spokeswoman said.

Although stores are trying to quickly fix their systems, retailers contend that the problem is becoming worse because banks are issuing hundreds of thousands of the new cards each month.



Tales of Redemption

David Bradley

ALWAYS OUTNUMBERED, ALWAYS OUTGUNNED
By Walter Mosley
Norton. 208 pp. $23

IN 1940 Richard Wright's Native Son exploded onto the American literary and social scene. With authenticity implied by its having been written by a black and based on a celebrated Chicago murder case, the novel immediately became a massive bestseller. Most reviewers labeled it as searing a protest against racism as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin had been against slavery. Henry Seidel Canby predicted, "No white man — and, I suspect, few Negroes — will finish this narrative without an enlargement of imagination toward the psychological problems of the Negroes . . . and an appreciable extension of sympathy."

Sympathy was not Wright's goal; his intention was to write a tale "so hard and deep" that readers "would have to face it without the consolation of tears." Accordingly, he created a protagonist, Bigger Thomas, who almost seems the prototype for contemporary criminology's "young black male." A small-time gang-banger, Bigger accidentally smothers a white socialite, then rapes and murders his black lover during a pathetic escape attempt. Awaiting execution for the murder of the socialite, he attempts to comprehend the forces that shaped his life — and fails.

One suspects that no white readers — and few black ones — wept at Bigger's death. But one also suspects that for some Bigger confirmed bigotry rather than enlarged the imagination. Today, when blacks — and a few whites — are painfully aware of the threat men like Bigger pose to the black community, Wright's protest seems paradoxical, for in both a social and a literary sense, Bigger is more a part of the problem than of the solution.

But now another black writer, Walter Mosley, author of the best-selling Easy Rawlins detective novels, has revisited Bigger in a powerful work of protest, Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned. Though Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned is not a novel but a collection of stories, they all share the central character of Socrates Fortlow, a 58-year-old black ex-convict who dwells in unsplendid isolation in the Los Angeles ghetto of Watts, in a shack that even the landlord has forgotten. He subsists on the redemption of cans and bottles.

In his youth Fortlow, like Bigger, murdered and raped. But unlike Bigger's, Fortlow's crimes were committed against blacks only; he was sentenced not to death but life. After 27 years in prison — during which he killed repeatedly — he was released. Though an old man, he went west. After one week in Los Angeles, he beat the blood and spirit from a young black named Rinnett. Though prison had not changed him, the encounter with Rinnett did. Fortlow saw how Rinnett gradually "grew older and more somber . . . meaner and shabbier," and, although he never spoke with Rinnett again, he found himself having "imaginary talks" with him. Those virtual dialogues helped move Fortlow from penitentiary to penitence.

Saying that gives nothing away, for in collecting these tales, some of which have been published individually, Mosley cast Fortlow's story in epic form. We first see Fortlow *in medias res*, already so concerned about his moral progress that he literally grades himself daily. The issues of the plots are presented in . . . well, Socratic dialogues.

To those used to detective fiction, this may sound boring. It is not. For Mosley invests mundane situations with moral peril and concomitant opportunities for growth. The first story begins with the killing of a rooster by an angry black boy named Darryl; this forces Fortlow to confront his own youthful rage. In the second, Fortlow is tempted to kill again — but this time with the sanction of a black community that is terrorized by a drug dealer. In another, he wanders into a situation that mirrors his original crime. From tale to tale the problems grow in complexity, and the tension is as tight as in any thriller as Fortlow seeks — in the narrow space society affords him — nonviolent solutions that will also preserve his dignity.

Mosley has thought hard about the criminality in the black community. He has also thought about Wright's portrayal of Bigger; the parallels are abundant. But Mosley has made different — and arguably better — decisions. Wright limited himself to Bigger's point of view, which meant drab perceptions and an amoral consciousness. Mosley has enriched his descriptions with language and imagery beyond Fortlow's ken, and invested Fortlow with both a conscience and a voice. Bigger was inarticulate; Fortlow speaks with realistic simplicity and unsparing honesty: "A man like me shoulda been hung, gassed, and then electrocuted. But they didn't kill me because I was the best kinda rule-followin' niggah. I killed my own people an' then let myself get caught. To my own people I was a dog, but the men who made the rules threw me a bone and let me live."

The combined effect is so moving one cannot help but wish that Mosley had not only collected the tales but reshaped them to remove the repetitions that are needed for them to stand alone. The passages that fill in Fortlow's background are repetitive, and their rendering is annoyingly blocky. Some tales seem shoehorned into too small a space: plots move with unnatural quickness, time is awkwardly compressed, and complex moral issues get resolved too swiftly, neatly and finally.

But one also cannot help but applaud not only what Walter Mosley has done but the risk he has run in doing it. A successful commercial novelist, he could have sequestered himself with a proven character and genre. Instead, he created the story of Socrates Fortlow and challenged his audience to read it . . . and weep.



ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

Concrete Route to the Heart of America

Louis Jacobson

DIVIDED HIGHWAYS
Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life
By Tom Lewis
Viking. 354 pp. $27.95

TO THE occasional snickers of colleagues, I have long contended that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 was the most significant piece of congressional legislation this century. Though the benefits of the Civil Rights Act, the Social Security Act and the G.I. Bill remain far more firmly entrenched in the popular consciousness, I posit that the now-obscure legislation that kick-started the interstate highway system deserves the prize. For both good and ill, the interstates have influenced almost every facet of American life — wider consumer choice, the freedom of the road, malls, suburban sprawl, congestion, convenient vacations, motels and fast food, an oil-obsessive foreign policy, worsening air quality, noise pollution.

Now — more than four decades after the initiation of a project that our present, small-government era would find inconceivably ambitious — I have found a rhetorical ally in Skidmore College English professor Tom Lewis. Like Lewis's previous book Empire Of The Air: The Men Who Made Radio, Divided Highways has spawned a major public television documentary, and it shows: Lewis makes accessible a subject that might otherwise interest only infrastructure geeks. Using the finely crafted vignettes of the documentarian, Lewis makes living characters of the rather dry engineers and administrators who created the 42,800-mile interstate system. He also assesses the interstates' drawbacks critically, without the demonization typical of anti-automobilist rhetoric.

For Lewis, the story begins in the mud of the rural Midwest, where a quagmire of farmland produced several important highway pioneers. One is the upright (and uptight) Thomas Harris MacDonald, whose success in dragging Iowa's roads out of the twin morasses of soggy ground and corrupt contracting won him a 34-year tenure as federal highway czar under a succession of presidents from Wilson to Truman. The other muddy Midwesterner is Dwight D. Eisenhower, who as part of a military convoy in 1919 needed 62 days to travel over mostly unpaved roads from Washington across to San Francisco. Thanks to the interstate system that Eisenhower proposed in the mid-1950s, Americans can now make the trip in a couple of days.

Lewis fruitfully explores several mostly forgotten debates over highway policy, including the choice between two compelling yet imperfect visions — one by New York City's planning powerbroker Robert Moses, and the other by architect Norman Bel Geddes. Moses created roads that were a pleasure to drive on, visually and almost spiritually, but he actively excluded minorities and the poor from his creations, refusing to build subway lanes on bridges and creating highway overpasses that were too squat to allow buses. Bel Geddes's alternative, sponsored by General Motors at the 1939 World's Fair, was more democratic and ultimately closer to the interstates' final form. But his dreary, truck-friendly, elevated expressways presaged the worst of the coming congestion and urban destruction.

The reader gleans two major lessons from Divided Highways. One — though Lewis never mentions it explicitly — is that the interstates might have been better off had they been built only in rural areas and metropolitan outskirts. As he explains in detail, the most unpopular and destructive routes were those that plunged deep into urban downtowns, typically leveling the functional, working-class neighborhoods in their way. Measured by mileage, these account for a tiny portion of the interstate system, yet they were usually the most expensive and most difficult to build. Had highway officials forgone their visions of urban freeways, they might have much avoided the negative PR that began threatening their endeavors in the 1960s.

BUT THE engineering profession and its political allies were filled with hubris — and that is the second lesson of Divided Highways. In one extreme but suggestive example, highway engineers as late as the mid-1960s gave serious consideration to nuking a mountain in California with a force equal to 133 Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. Lewis explains this mindset by pointing out the odd duality of highways: They profoundly influence daily life, yet they lack the instantaneous visual power of, say, a dam or a skyscraper. As a result, he notes, civil engineering tended to be an academic and technological backwater in which pedagogues frowned upon students studying any of the liberal arts or showing independent thought. In other words, Lewis suggests, highway engineers were both visionary and tedious — just like the roads they were building.

In his rush to criticize these men (yes, mostly men) and their mistakes, Lewis tends to overplay the interstates' drawbacks, citing — seemingly with approval — Charles Kuralt's half-truth that "thanks to the interstate highway system, it is now possible to cross the country from coast to coast without seeing anything." But he also mentions some of the interstates' vast benefits, such as the little-noticed yet now-ubiquitous "just-in-time" production techniques, which enable parts suppliers to ship their goods to manufacturers quickly via interstate, eliminating the need for huge stockpiles of inventory. Such developments have increased business efficiency and lowered prices. (In a particularly nice turn of phrase, Lewis describes today's interstates as "a vast rolling and fluid warehouse.")

To his credit, the author hints that we cannot blame a simple conspiracy of carmakers, gas companies and highway builders for the interstates' faults. Instead, it is motorists — all of us — who have chosen the efficiency and reliability of interstates, as well as the suburban homes, chain stores and malls that the highways have spawned. We continue to vote for the interstates with our feet — which are inevitably perched over the gas pedal.

Millions of Asians face misery of forced repatriation

Nicholas Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

THE Southeast Asian financial crisis is threatening a new dimension in human misery as the governments of its battered Tiger economies planned to expel millions of foreign migrant workers. Thailand and Malaysia aim to throw out at least 2.5 million labourers, while South Korea is likely to send back all its 270,000 guest workers.

The forced repatriation will cause unprecedented hardship for some of Asia's poorest countries, as well as threatening widespread political instability.

It represents a double blow, halting the flow of foreign earnings on which poor countries such as Indonesia, Burma and Bangladesh have relied heavily, and adding millions to the jobless total.

Thailand will force tens of thousands of workers across the border into Burma, one of the world's most backward economies, crippled by decades of mismanagement. Returnees will include many from ethnic minorities who fled bloody campaigns by the ruling military junta.

The repercussions of the Malaysian move could prove even more drastic. Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country, is already struggling to cope with up to 2 million people whom business leaders and military chiefs say have lost their jobs. And that is just the start. "This crisis is still in its early stage," said a political analyst, Dewi Fortuna Anwar.

Last year Indonesia was forced to take back thousands of workers from Saudia Arabia who had overstayed their permits. The much bigger repatriations that loom if Malaysia goes ahead with its plans would come as Indonesia grapples with the impact of severe drought as well as the regional economic crisis.

Mass repatriations will add another potentially destabilising ingredient into what is becoming an increasingly volatile political equation. Worries are mounting that economic hardship may ignite violent protests, amid deepening uncertainty over the future of 76-year-old President Suharto.

Rioting in the city of Bandung last week reflected the problem. Although the causes were unrelated to the economic crisis, analysts discerned worrying trends: a willingness to fight back against police and a loss of credibility on the part of authorities.

A Thai minister announced last week that the government intended to repatriate between 300,000 and 500,000 foreign labourers every year for the next three years. The government believes their departure will free work for the 2 million Thais expected to be made jobless by the country's giddy slide from boom to bust.

Authorities have only a rough estimate of the number of foreigners who have found jobs in Thailand, mostly in construction and factories and most of them illegally, but aim to solve the problem by fining and jailing employers who defy expulsion notices.

On a collision course with disaster

The West is treating the Asian crisis as if the Titanic had never sunk, writes **Larry Elliot**

HOLLYWOOD's latest stab at portraying the fateful maiden voyage of the Titanic opens in Britain next week. But with Western capitalism bearing down on the iceberg of Depression, the question is, who needs a film when you can have the real thing?

If ever there was a case of art imitating reality it is the current inability of the global economic and political élite to recognise that they are on a collision course with disaster. Unlike in April 1912, there is still time — just — for the SS Global Economy to avoid the looming tragedy, but it will be a close-run thing.

Warning bells are ringing, particularly in Washington. Bill Clinton has intervened directly in the crisis in Indonesia and is trying to persuade Japan to take urgent steps to prevent the contagion spreading to the world's second-biggest economy.

But it is late in the day. The past seven months have been marked by shocking complacency, not only about the ability of states to inoculate themselves against the Asian crisis, but also about the supposed indestructibility of a globalisation process built on uncontrolled capital flows, excessive speculation, mountains of debt, political corruption and old-fashioned greed.

The Titanic's lesson is that there is no such thing as an unsinkable ship. It is vital that the degree of danger be acknowledged in order to avert a full-blooded crash. But it is also important that any rescue package should be tailored for the poor and weak as well the global financiers whose wreckless lending helped bring about the crisis.

The next few weeks will be critical. Japan seems to think it can sit back and wait for something to turn up. It has to be disabused of that notion. Europe is turning a blind eye to what is going on in Asia, confident that its largely sheltered economy can weather any storm. As in 1912, the band plays on.

Martin Armstrong, of Princeton Economics, puts it this way. "The Asian currency epidemic is act one in a play [which] will gradually unfold over the next five years.

"Indeed, it is quite reminiscent of the 1930s, when capital rushed around the globe from currency to currency in search of value, profit and financial stability."

The one country in the early 1930s not to default was the United States. The overvalued dollar led to significant deflation then, and there are parallels with today's imbroglio. The yen has weakened against the dollar, and currencies pegged to the dollar have bombed. European currencies have fallen since it became clear that monetary union was likely, because international capital fears the euro may be more of a Titanic II than the answer to low growth and unemployment.

Low interest rates and a depreciating yen in Japan, together with a capital flight from Europe, has led to money pouring into the US. The predictable result has been a rising dollar and booming shares. In the short term, the dollar may rise further and the Dow Jones continue on its merry way towards 10,000. That will be seen as evidence that the crisis is over. It will not be.

China has so far not joined in the round of Asian devaluations, but may do so if the fall in its Asian neighbours' currencies threatens its export-led growth. The huge drop in Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index and the collapse of Peregrine Investments, a leading regional bank, was not good news. Beijing has nerves of steel, but its patience is not inexhaustible.

It is a fallacy to believe that the Asian and European economies can all export their way out of trouble on the back of depreciating currencies. It will lead to greater chaos as the world financial system collapses under the weight of competitive devaluations.

This is a grim scenario. But there is a silver lining for those who believe that the alternative to unfettered globalisation is root and branch reform, rather than the "inevitable" collapse of capitalism.

George Soros's recognition of the need for greater regulation of the international financial system shows that even the biggest of the speculators can see an argument for proper curbs on financial systems, making the relationship between lenders and borrowers more egalitarian. Mr Soros himself favours an international credit insurance corporation, which would force borrowers to come clean about their credit position but limit guaranteed loans.

Professor Kunibert Raffer, of the University of Vienna, has an alternative that effectively allows debtor governments to seek protection from creditors by using American-style bankruptcy codes.

Taxing foreign currency speculation, first proposed by James Tobin, may be an idea whose time has come. Chile, which has been operating a variant of a Tobin tax — it has a transaction tax and a requirement that investors deposit 30 per cent of their funds with the central bank for one year — has so far escaped unscathed.

Finally, there may be a long overdue reprise of the global institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund. The IMF deserves some sympathy for its predicament of late, because it would have been damned had it not bailed out Thailand and South Korea and is now damned because it did. It is unrealistic to expect it to transmogrify overnight, but a debate must now begin on what the IMF is for — to help the people of Asia, or Wall Street and the American multinationals?

Joseph Stiglitz, chief economist at the World Bank, cautioned last week that the plight of ordinary people in Asia should not be forgotten, saying that the IMF needed to beware of pushing economies into recession. There is always a tendency to think that once the IMF has stabilised a financial system and put in a structural adjustment programme, then everything will be fine. But that is not the case. There are more people living in poverty in Latin America than in 1980.

The real tragedy of the Titanic was not just that there were too few lifeboats but that most of the 1,500 deaths were among the poor emigrants stuck below in steerage. Something to bear in mind, perhaps, in the weeks and months to come.

In Brief

THE scale of the task of rebuilding Japan's battered economy was highlighted when the finance ministry disclosed that the nation's banks were saddled with $560 billion in loans, three times higher than admitted.

BUSINESS is booming in the global black economy, according to a report in the Economist, which estimates that this year $3 trillion worth of business — equivalent to the combined output of Spain and Germany — will escape the taxman's watchful eye.

MICROSOFT'S rival in the Internet browser wars, Netscape Communications, warned of a fourth quarter loss of up to $89 million that will put the company back in the red for 1997. Meanwhile Apple Computer predicted it would report profit of more than $45 million for its first quarter in 1998.

BRITISH company directors are ignoring pleas from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to curtail boardroom greed, awarding themselves pay rises four times higher than the increases they give their employees, says the Trades Union Congress.

NATIONAL SAVINGS interest rates in the UK were cut for the first time in two years, amid renewed hopes that base rates may at last have peaked.

W H Smith agreed to sell its Waterstone's bookselling chain to the music group EMI.

CINVEN, the venture capital firm, won control of IPC Magazines from Reed Elsevier in a $1.3 billion management buy-out, one of the largest such deals in British corporate history.

MERSEYSIDE hopes to win significant new foreign investment after Ford's decision to make its new "baby" Jaguar at the Halewood plant. Meanwhile Toyota, Japan's largest car manufacturer, is to invest $240 million to expand its engine plant at Deeside in North Wales.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates January 13	Sterling rates January 6
Australia	2.5006-2.5041	2.5468-2.5506
Austria	20.66-20.68	20.95-20.97
Belgium	60.60-60.69	61.38-61.44
Canada	2.2976-2.2998	2.331-2.3351
Denmark	11.18-11.19	11.34-11.35
France	9.83-9.84	9.96-9.97
Germany	2.9382-2.9406	2.9782-2.9813
Hong Kong	12.53-12.54	12.69-12.70
Ireland	1.1773-1.1803	1.1682-1.1705
Italy	2,887-2,890	2,924-2,927
Japan	212.26-212.53	219.22-219.42
Netherlands	3.3111-3.3148	3.3555-3.3586
New Zealand	2.8356-2.8400	2.8746-2.8795
Norway	12.06-12.07	12.18-12.20
Portugal	300.50-300.85	304.59-304.90
Spain	249.05-249.35	251.96-252.25
Sweden	12.90-12.92	13.11-13.12
Switzerland	2.3832-2.3863	2.4190-2.4221
USA	1.6144-1.6164	1.6382-1.6390
ECU	1.4871-1.4895	1.5050-1.5067

FTSE 100 Share Index down [illegible]. FTSE 250 Index down [illegible]. Gold down [illegible].

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
January 18 1998

Controversy is raging in Russia over radical proposals to reform the education system. **Pieta Monks** reports

Moscow's march against time

THE convulsions now shaking Russia are mirrored in a multitude of proposed reforms of the educational system. They include suggestions that the school-leaving age be lowered to 15 for all but the brightest children, that student loans be abolished and fees implemented for students in higher education.

There are widespread fears among those engaged in education at all levels in Russia that these changes and others will be imposed upon them in the forthcoming educational reform plan, the draft report of which will be published in the spring. Controversy rages, even at ministerial level where there is disagreement between the minister of education, Vladimir Kinelov, a traditionalist, and his deputy, Alexander Asmolov, who wants to cut down the number of state universities from 800 to 300, and to expand the private sector.

The debate being conducted all over Russia in schools, universities and in the media, focuses primarily on how far privatisation of the education system will go. One of the proposals suggests giving schools only half the money they need to pay their staff. The school would have to find the remaining 50 per cent itself.

Vladimir Sapozhnikov, a prize-winning mathematics teacher, can hardly hide his disgust at these proposals, and speaks for the vast majority of his colleagues when he says: "All my life I have worked for the sake of my pupils — am I now to teach only those who can pay me?" He is also vehemently opposed to the suggestion that most children should leave school at 15.

Other proposals floated include raising the school-leaving age to 18, mainly to stop boys dodging the army. At the moment young men can bypass the army (whose entry age is 18) by leaving school at 17 and immediately entering university, after which they are no longer eligible for conscription.

The two-year army stint is seen as a neat economic and social answer to unemployed, feckless school-leavers (for two years at least). And the theory is that after the army the boys make better students at university. However, the army is in the process of reform and in future may no longer demand universal conscription.

In universities it is proposed that grants be abolished and tuition fees introduced. The argument goes that when students pay for their own education they appreciate it more. However, this view was rejected at last year's conference of university vice-chancellors in Moscow, Safeguarding The Future Of Education In Russia, where delegates voted overwhelmingly to oppose any introduction of fees and the abolition of grants.



A government proposal to raise the school-leaving age aims to prevent young men from dodging conscription PHOTO: MARTIN ROEMERS

Misha Bashuratyan is the deputy dean of the department of sociology at Moscow State University, and he has been particularly vocal in his opposition to any attempt at introducing fees. He explained the particular difficulty that rural students would face if grants were abolished and fees introduced: "Muscovites might have the know-how to get sponsorship, but students from small villages would have no chance whatsoever. Quite simply, it would mean that many able students could no longer go on to university."

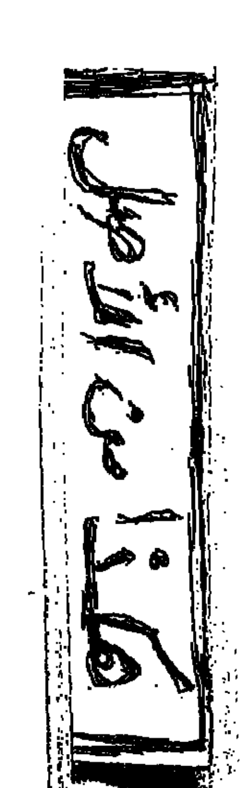
There is also a proposal to abolish the individual exams that institutes of higher education conduct and to introduce national testing, where a certain mark will qualify the applicant to go to any university they want, as in most European Union countries.

Adopting a Western model and rejecting the traditional Russian system is a deeply unpopular idea. Already schools have had a foretaste of this. Last August all schools in Moscow received a directive to introduce a new subject — how to be a good citizen — into the classroom. There were no text books and no guidelines on how to teach it. But from September 1 it had to be taught in all Moscow schools for 10 hours a week, the time to be taken from subjects such as mathematics and literature. And there are further proposals to exclude "difficult" classics from the timetable, such as Pushkin's masterpiece, Eugene Onegin, and Gogol's 19th century satire, Dead Souls.

Times are hard in Russia, and money is short. Highly qualified professionals are paid appallingly and many of them are now working as non-specialists in money-making ventures merely to survive.

At the moment there is a shortage of teachers particularly in English and mathematics. Schools and universities are in vital need of capital repairs. Standards in schools are falling, applicants to universities ill-prepared. Workers in schools and higher education institutes feel the proposed reforms will do little to anything to solve these problems. The fear is that they will be implemented, nevertheless.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
January 18 1998



PROGRAMME OFFICERS

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- Substantial experience of strategic planning and experience of translating policy/strategic documents into practical plans; evaluating and monitoring action against plans.
- Experience of leading action on setting, monitoring and reporting on standards and assessing departmental performance against them.

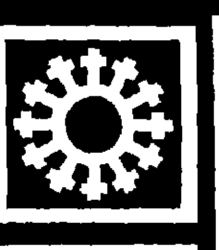
For further information and an application form please write, quoting the appropriate reference, to: Jackie Denton, Human Resources - UK Programmes (Team 4), SCF, 17 Grove Lane, Camberwell, London SE5 8RD. Fax: 0171 703 2278.

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: Monday 9th February 1998.

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General Secretary

USPG

The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is a voluntary mission agency founded in 1701, serving the worldwide church in over 50 countries. Recognising the special place that the poor and excluded have in God's heart, USPG exists to: WITNESS and WORK with others by proclaiming God's saving love to all people in all places; SERVE, CHALLENGE and be CHALLENGED by the worldwide church as it proclaims the reconciling work of God in Christ for all; PROMOTE justice and SHARE resources and experience to further God's Kingdom.

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The post is based in London. The current salary is £27,824 which includes other allowances such as London Allowance and a Housing Factor. All salaries are currently being reviewed.

Please apply to: **The Deputy Secretary, USPG, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XA. (Tel: 0171 928 8681 Ext. 402. Fax: 0171 928 2371) for an application form and further details. Enquiries may be made of Revd Canon Helen Cunliffe, Chair of the Council, Tel: 0171 407 3708.**

Initial interviews will be held in London on 30th/31st March 1998 with final interviews in London and Birmingham on 2nd/3rd April 1998.

Closing date for completed applications: 23rd February 1998.

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Head of Model Factories:	Responsible for development of micro-scale model factories (4), including development of food products & their packaging and stimulation of group food processing businesses in rural areas (Kakamega or Kerugoya)
Marketing Officer:	Horticultural Specialist with group development skills to facilitate organised production, crop handling, delivery and sales to local outlets and factories (Kerugoya and Kakamega)
Technical Writer/Editor:	Short term inputs or part-time work in development of advisory materials for horticultural production and sales
Consultancy opportunities	
Contracting specialist:	Max 4 months of input to investigate contract possibilities between local business and organised groups of farmers
Database specialist:	Set up databases to specifications (for certification of quality etc); train local people in database operations
Small business development:	Prepare guidelines for a participatory approach, and train local staff and farmers
Food Processing:	Prepare guidelines on micro-factory operations, product development for low cost operations in rural areas
Marketing:	Identify a market intelligence system and investigate product opportunities in the Kenyan market-place
Sales Opportunities:	Member of a team to prepare a strategy and database for bridging gaps between rural farmers and buyers in Europe (Candidates based in U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Portugal are sought) 2-4 months input.

Applicants are advised to submit a hand-written letter of application giving three good reasons for the application, a short CV, names and addresses of three referees of good standing and salary expectations. Reply to ABLH, Box 39042, Nairobi, Kenya. Short-listed applicants will be called for interview early in 1998.



The International Rescue Committee (IRC), a not-for-profit, non-sectarian humanitarian refugee and relief organization, is currently recruiting:

Brazzaville, Rep of Congo

Emergency Water and Construction Manager

Responsibilities: project design; construction and logistics of water/sanitation and construction projects; recruitment and supervision of local workers and water supply technicians; Requirements: Water and Sanitation experience in developing nations; Civil Engineering degree required; management experience a must; French fluency required. Position is for three months, available immediately. Job E134.

Emergency Reproductive Health Manager

Responsibilities: establish an urban emergency reproductive health (RH) program based in Brazzaville; establish the means to provide the Minimal Initial Service Package of RH services to the conflict affected population of reproductive age. Requirements: RN or MPH, MD preferred, extensive experience in RH programs (family planning, STD/HIV education, safe motherhood, sexual and gender violence). Contract length: 3 months. Job E135. Send resume and cover letter to: Andrew Roberts, e-mail:andrew@intrescom.org or Fax:00 1 212 551 3170



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Applications: CV and covering letter to Elaine Smart, Personnel Manager, CARE International UK, Tower House, 8-14 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HA, by 30 January 1998.



BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

Programme Manager, Cameroon

Cameroon is a high priority country for biodiversity conservation in Africa. The Programme Manager will develop local-NGO capacity, supervise the national Important Bird area process, and provide in-country support to Integrated Conservation and Development Projects. BirdLife International are seeking to appoint a biologist (minimum M.Sc.) with experience in institutional strengthening, NGO development, training and office management. The position will be based in Yaounde. Fluency in French and English are essential.

Salary range £18,825 - £23,531 rising to £28,238 + 12% pension

Project Co-ordinator, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Management and Conservation Project, Kenya.

The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest is of global importance for its biodiversity. The EU—funded ASFMP aims to conserve the forest through the integration of sustainable, participatory rural development, forest management, ecotourism and capacity building. It operates through the coordination of national government institutions and local and national NGOs. The Project Co-ordinator has responsibility for overall management and coordination of all project activities. He or she will have a higher degree or equivalent experience in community development, a proven understanding of conservation and natural resource management, and at least 5 years experience of project management, preferably in Africa. The job will be based in Watamu. Swahili an advantage.

Salary range £20,208 - £25,260 rising to £30,312 + 12% pension

Please apply in writing, enclosing a CV, and stating position(s) applied for, to the Africa Division Secretary, Trish Wilson, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, UK, CB3 0NA.

E-mail:patricia.wilson@birdlife.org.uk

Tel: +44(0)1223 277318. Fax: +44(0)1223 277 200

(PLEASE QUOTE REF. GW1). Closing date for applications: 18 February 1998. Interviews will take place in Cambridge in early March.

BirdLife International is an alliance of organisations devoted to the conservation of birds and their environment globally.

Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

PROGRAMME AND POLICY DIRECTOR
- Deputy to the Executive Director

Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI) is a global network of over 800 NGOs working on environment and sustainable development. By "facilitating the voice of the grassroots" ELCI strives to support NGOs/CBOs to build on each other's strengths, reflect their needs, aspirations and knowledge in governance at all levels, and use the output of global processes at local levels.

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Qualifications: The preferred candidate will have superior environmental training and extensive experience in environmental movements with proven ability in environmental policy analysis and advocacy; programme development and implementation, building and managing a dynamic work team, programme financial management; work harmoniously in multicultural settings, working effectively with grassroots environmental NGOs; producing written and oral communications in English and preferably at least one of French or Spanish language.

The post will be located in Nairobi, with a salary range of US$30,000-$38,000p.a. as well as assistance for re-location, housing, medical, and education. For further information on the position please contact the following address. ELCI is an equal opportunity employer with codes of conduct on gender, race, women are encouraged to apply.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS 15 FEBRUARY 1998. Interviews of short-listed candidates will be held in Nairobi mid March. Interested candidates should send full c.v. with supporting documents and at least three referees to:

The Executive Director
Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI)
P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, KENYA;
Tel: (254-2)562-015,562-022
Fax: (254-2)562-175;e-mail: rsinclair@elci.sasa.unon.org

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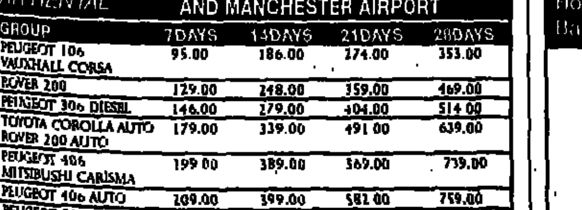
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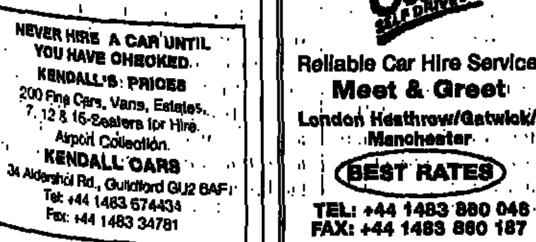


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Ominous cry of the raven

Paul Evans

THE year begins its slow spiral out of the hill. Looking down from the top of Maddocks hill I hear the raven before I see it — calling from the barking darkness of its journey up from the old quarry floor. It circles slowly, reaching long, blue-black wings into the southwesterly, a wind propelling great banks of marauding cloud up over the hills of south Shropshire. Sunlight catches plumes of steam from Buildwas power station in the Severn Gorge to the east and Allscot sugar beet factory to the west. A dark cloud loiters over the Clee Hills. The sky piles northwards into the murky distance of the plain.

As the raven's carousel widens, it spills air from under its wings by folding them and flipping sideways like a fighter-plane into the wind to tumble a few feet and then, catching the spiralling course it has set for itself, soars outward and upward again With each "gracc" the raven speaks for the year: its death and rebirth; its bad luck and good omens; its storms, hidden weapons, buried treasure . . .

The English word raven for *Corvus corax*, the largest and most enigmatic of the crows, is closest to the Danish name Ravn and came with settlers who brought their mythologies from Scandinavia. Elsewhere in Europe the raven has more onomatopoeic names: the raaf of Netherlands, ronk of Estonia, kraukils of Latvia and krokar of Slovenia suggest the bird's rough voice. Such a voice resonates through ancient cultures around the world. Ravens have long been associated with divination from North America to China. The corvidomancers — those who foretell the future by interpreting the signs of crows and their tribe — knew that each wonderful rasping croak-bark of the raven is ominous.

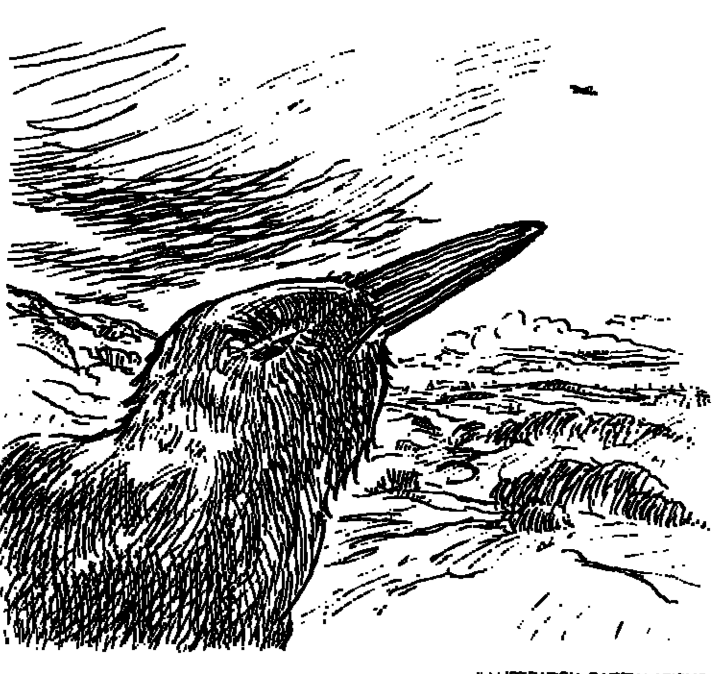


ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Numamiut Eskimos believed wolves could track caribou by following ravens. In the Hebrides, boys who drank from a raven's skull were said to be able to find dead bodies. In Ireland, where the raven is called Fiach dubh, there are extremely detailed accounts of raven divination where the position of sightings and the notes of each call foretell very particular events. In British Celtic mythology the raven is sacred to Bran, the god-king whose oracular head is buried on the site now occupied by the Tower of London. Ravens are still kept at the Tower and legend has it that when they go the kingdom will fall.

We may have lost the skills of the corvidomancers, but the presence of these enigmatic birds, which can symbolise both solar wisdom and the powers of darkness, continue to enthral. This raven's death-tidings and songs of wild joy answer to no one. Why should it? The sky is full of omens of its own: it speaks of rains that will lash, storms that will crash, gales that will thrash through trees. If ravens predict storms, this one has certainly been accurate. This year began with some of the fiercest gales to have hit Britain since 1987. With blasting winds, which killed four people and cut the power supply to thousands of homes, came torrential rains and flooded rivers.

As the raven calls and wheels, flips and tumbles, this midnight spirit of the winter sun is joined by its mate from the north. Together they dance higher, and as the circle widens they vanish into the Wrekin woods — the silver-purple of birches; the smoke-green of oaks; and the fox-pelt patches of bracken. The ravens are gone and the new year is with us. Whatever we may make of the omens of birds or stormy skies, we remain none the wiser.

Chess Leonard Barden

RUSSIA'S monopoly of the World Senior Championship for over-60s was surprisingly broken when Janis Klovans of Latvia won with 9/11 from a record entry of more than 200 players at Bad Wildbad, Germany. Klovans automatically became a grandmaster at the age of 62, the oldest person to qualify for the title, when he scored in the final round while the defending champion Mark Taimanov and two other rivals with superior tie-breaks settled for early draws. Britain's John Littlewood totalled 7½ and shared eleventh place in this strong company.

Correct strategy for a decisive game is often debated. Should you aim for a riskless slight edge, or stoke up tension and complications in an unbalanced position? Paradoxically, the former approach seems to work better against an opponent who only wants a draw. The famous games Lasker v Capablanca 1914 and Alekhine v Fine 1937 were two cases where eminent GMs requiring half a point as Black played too passively.

Klovans's Austrian opponent in the final round of the World Senior could also have become champion by winning, so the Latvian knew that his opponent could not afford solid defence. Klovans gambited a pawn to achieve active play, and got the chance to enter the record books in style by a double rook sacrifice.

H Baumgartner v J Klovans

1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 e6 4 0-0 Be7 5 d4 0-0 6 c4 dxc4 7 Ne5 Nc6!? A remarkable pawn sacrifice which allows the exchange of two pairs of minor pieces and seems to give Black only nebulous compensation; but White, in the heat of over-the-board play, runs into a series of niggling problems.

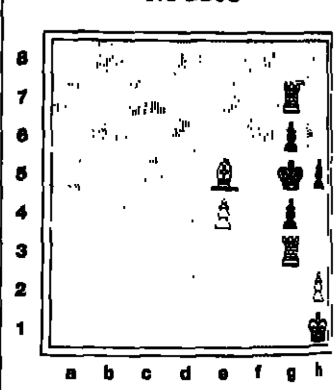
8 Bxc6 The alternative 8 Nxc6 bxc6 9 Bxc6 Rb8 10 Bg2 Bb7 11 Nc3 Bxg2 12 Kxg2 c5 13 dxc5 Bxc5 gives Black pressure against b2.

bxc6 9 Nxc6 Qe8 10 Nxe7+ Qxe7 11 Qc2 e5 12 Qxc4 exd4 13 Qxd4 Rd8 14 Qh4?! The queen is isolated and out of play here, so 14 Qa4 Bd7? 15 Qa3 looks better.

Rb8 15 Nc3 Rb4 16 Qg5 Now the queen is totally offside. 16 e4 Bb7 17 Bg5 h6 18 Bxf6 Qxf6 19 Qxf6 gives endgame drawing chances.

e5 17 e4 h6 18 Qh4 Rd3 19 a3 Rc4 20 h3 Bb7 21 f3 Qc5+ 22 Kh1? 22 Kh2 is a tougher defence. The king on a light square sets up a decisive tactic. Rcxe3! A thematic sacrifice based on Black's centralised army and the exposed white king. 23 bxc3 Rxf3! 24 Rxf3 Bxe4 25 Kg2 Bxf3+ 26 Kxf3 Qxc3+ 27 Be3 Qxa1 28 Qb4 Qf1+ 29 Resigns. If 29 Bf2 e4+ 30 Ke3 Nd5+ wins the queen.

No 2506



White mates in three moves, against any defence (by V Nabokov, The Problemist 1969). Lolita's creator was an active problem composer and wrote a chess novel, The Defence. The black king in his puzzle is surrounded, and you have to find a subtle first move with some delicate follow-ups.

No 2505: 1 e4 and 2 Qg4. If the BK has gone to f8, f7 or f6, then 3 Qd7, otherwise 3 Qg7 and mate in a further three moves or less.

Quick crossword no. 401

Across

1 Finished — from beginning to end (7)
8 Expression of regret (7)
9 After screen (7)
10 Lockjaw (7)
11 Machine for bundling hay (5)
13 Riddle (9)
15 Household pest (9)
18 Declare — total (5)
21 Favouring the best (7)
22 Meantime (7)
23 Acetic acid (7)
24 Serious (7)

Down

1 Pulsate (5)
2 Of the country (5)
3 Landing gear (13)
4 Hurry (6)
5 Wealth-seeker (7-6)
6 Rather (6)
7 Alabaster (6)
12 Too (4)
14 Impel (4)
15 Stick together — or split apart (6)
16 Customer (6)
17 Dress (6)
19 Laconic (5)
20 Relax — the terms of reference (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE first round of matches for the Camrose Trophy, the home International series involving England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, was played in December last year. The story is a familiar one in recent times — England scored a comfortable win against Wales, but Scotland thrashed the Irish to take an early lead in the series. The next round will be played between England and Ireland at the Moat House Hotel, Oxford, over the weekend of January 17-18.

The largest swing in the England v Wales match turned on a controversial point of bidding theory: the interpretation of a jump to five of a major suit in a contested auction. Consider the problem faced by the Welsh South player on the hand below:

♠AKQ9654 ♥83 ♦74 ♣53

At love all, your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. He is playing a strong club system, so he need not have length or strength in the diamond suit. What bid would you make? There is a case for a pre-emptive jump to three spades or even four spades, but expert players are wary of pre-empting with a sterile 7-2-2-2 distribution. And when you hold the spade suit, there is less to be gained by jamming the enemy auction; you can always outbid them should the need arise. So the Welsh South overcalled with one spade, and the bidding developed like this:

South	West	North	East
			1♦
1♠	Pass	2♦[1]	Dble[2]
3♠	Pass	5♠	Pass
?			

(1) A cue bid, showing a strong hand
(2) Showing a real diamond suit

The debate about a jump to five of a major suit has always divided bridge philosophers into two schools. One argues that it asks partner to bid a slam with good trumps, the other that it asks for control of the suit shown by the enemy.

At the table, South thought that his partner was asking about trump quality. His spades were about as good as they could be, so he jumped to six spades. Alas, that wasn't what North was after; the full hand was (see table) and the English defenders quickly cashed two diamonds to defeat the slam. Worse was to follow from the Welsh point of view, because the bidding at the other table was:

North
♠ 10 8 2
♥ A K
♦ J 10 6 5
♣ A K Q 10

West
♠ 7 3
♥ J 9 8 6 5 2
♦ 8 3 2
♣ J 6

East
♠ J
♥ Q 10 4
♦ A K Q 9
♣ 9 8 7 4 2

South
♠ A K Q 9 6 5 4
♥ 8 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 5 3

South	West	North	East
			1♦
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♠	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

South chose to pre-empt as high as he dared, and North made a practical choice with 4NT. When South's response showed the ace, king and queen of spades, North thought he could afford the risk of two diamond losers — why should the defenders lead that suit? They didn't, and England picked up a swing of 14 IMPs. ©

Letter from China Francesca Hunter

A marriage of past and present

ONE cold Friday in a rural village of Lianyungang, I found myself presenting a traditional Chinese wedding for national television.

At about 10am the camera crew and I arrived at the groom's house and joined the commotion taking place amongst woks, baskets of cabbages, brick fires, and buckets of live fish. I couldn't discern the groom's parents because nobody was dressed up. Finally I was introduced to the mother, a dear little thing wearing men's-style suit trousers and a brown cardigan.

Along the side of the house stood four large bamboo baskets immaculately presenting their highly symbolic contents. In the first, two fish assured the bride that she would be free to come and go between her parent's home and her new home, that of the groom's parents. In the second basket lay a large strip of pork, a gift to the bride's parents in exchange for the bride herself. The third was full of firecrackers and sweet biscuits to mark the celebration. Finally, the fourth basket held a traditional sweet ricecake called go, a cake eaten at weddings because the word also means "high" in Chinese, thus making a wish for elevation in status and income.

Before leaving to collect the bride from her house, the groom, his best men, and the bridesmaid (casually dressed in corduroy pants and a ski-jacket) sat around a table drinking sugar tea and eating go. The sweetness of this snack helped ensure the sweetness of the marriage itself.

Five cars left for the bride's place amid deafening explosions of crackers. But the gate to her residence was blocked by the village police, who refused to allow the groom through. There was much loud jesting and bribing with cigarettes and sweets. From the laughter I soon realised this was just another tradition. If the bride was allowed to be received too easily, it would be an insult to her worth.

At last the seemingly terrified groom, his gregarious friends and the television cameras made their way into the tiny kitchen of the bride's home, where she stood beside the fridge, dressed smartly in a red wool suit and a red flower spray in her hair. The groom put the ring on her finger and they were married.

The baskets were unloaded and reloaded (minus the pork), more deafening crackers fired, and the newlyweds headed back to the groom's place where they were to enter the marital bedroom together.

But at the bedroom door, lo and behold, another blockade — this time by the groom's friends, who succeeded in stirring up the tension for a good half hour.

The marital suite revealed new furniture, a huge television, a stereo with lit-up palaces on the front, and eight silk quilts of different colours piled high on the bed.

The bride opened up her new wardrobe doors and I studied the parcel of fish and spring onions placed on the vanity unit. The green and white of the spring onions symbolised the virginity of the bride. Still today, the groom will check his wife's virginity on the wedding night, and, if not convinced, may send her back disgraced. Girls avoid strenuous physical exercise to prevent this disaster.

I briefly interviewed the couple on the new sofa while the cameraman propped himself up on the marriage bed. The bride told me that tradition demands she stay in this room, abstaining from food and accompanied only by her bridesmaid, for the rest of the day while the groom entertains the guests downstairs. During this time she must learn the patience needed for her marriage, while not eating or drinking ensures she cannot run away on the excuse of using the toilet.

For the villagers, the celebration would continue until late and deplete the entire savings of the groom's parents. But I was just about overwhelmed by the ever-contradictory mingling of tradition with commonplace, new wealth with lack of wealth, ancient customs with rural pragmatism.

I gave the couple my best wishes for a happy married life and thanked them for having me intrude upon their special day. Getting into the car I shook the hand of the groom's mother. It felt like bark. She smiled sweetly.

A Country Diary

Elizabeth Teather

NORTHERN TABLELANDS, *New South Wales:* This is spectacular country. Mountain streams have nibbled into the eastern edge of Australia for millions of years, maintaining their downcutting despite the massive uplift that left the Tablelands perched a kilometre above the sea.

It's a breathtaking view from the lookout above the Gara Gorge. I need a firm grasp on my sense of scale. Five hundred metres below, those "little" boulders are as big as houses. It would take a couple of hours of tortuous and dangerous scrambling to reach the tumbling river. Looking up and ahead, I can see huge rocky spurs, so steep and so many of them that they seem to have no horizontal dimension, each one a vertical slice of granite, one behind another like a series of stage flats. How far away is that blue mountain wall that closes the distant view? Five kilometres? Twenty-five? It's impossible to say.

Late afternoon and the birds are noisy. Two tiny blue and black wrens twitter and flitter; a red and blue parrot, a crimson rosella, watches from a branch, staid and silent. A treecreeper spirals quietly round a stringy-bark trunk.

Driving home, we stop to watch an echidna scuttle on sturdy legs along the sandy verge. Its quills gleam, dark brown mottle with pale tan. With its long, finger-shaped nose, it pokes around for insects.

The Cumbrian fells may lose out if European Union funding is diverted to poor regions PHOTO: DON McPHEE

Olympus and Ararat put life in the fells at risk

Martin Wainwright

THE northern fells of William Wordsworth are facing a challenge from Mount Ararat, alleged resting place of Noah's Ark, in a potentially devastating reallocation of European funds. The traditional home of the Greek gods, Mount Olympus, is also emerging as a rival to the Yorkshire landscape of Charles Kingsley's Water Babies and the moors which inspired Wilkie Collins's The Moonstone.

The drawing up of North/South battle lines within the European Union follows policy discussion at Brussels about ending the Northern Uplands subsidy, which has underpinned struggling hill farmers for almost a decade in beautiful but harsh regions like the Lake District.

More than $135 million of EU funding has nurtured the diversification of farming in Northern England's five great national parks, and provided infrastructure for tourism, "tele-cottaging" and similar reforms to the traditional economy.

A lobby within the EU is pressing for the budget to be diverted to less apparently comfortable regions such as struggling areas of Greece and potential EU newcomers, including former Soviet bloc countries and Turkey.

"The price of supporting small farms in Greece and Turkey could be the livelihood of our own farming here," says John Blackie of the Yorkshire Dales national park, which is forming an alliance with the Lake District, North York Moors, Peak District and Northumberland parks. "Just as we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, we could see this crucial funding taken away."

Advocates of change within the EU are pressing for greater emphasis on unemployment rates in awarding the money. The English parks lose out on any simple unemployment criteria, but argue that these tests overlook the limited and insecure nature of much work in upland farming and tourism.

"We have our own mountain to climb to get over these problems," says Robert Heseltine, chairman of the Yorkshire Dales park authority. "We have got a joint responsibility as national parks to fight not just for rural economic viability but for environmental enhancement. The parks are beautiful, but very fragile on both counts."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT is acomia/acomous which I find in Roget's Thesaurus but nowhere else?

ACOMIA means "baldness" and "acomous" means "bald". Etymologically, acomia is a Greek word, a combination of "a-" which means "not" or "without" and "komé" which means "hair of the head". [Stedman's Medical Dictionary.] — *Mahesh Das Mundhra, London*

CAN the Queen cook?

I REMEMBER reading in some magazine not many years after their marriage that Prince Philip taught the Queen how to fry bacon and eggs late at night in their private apartments — a culinary art of which she had had no previous experience. — *Roger Milton, Raglan, NSW, Australia*

AT WHAT speed would Santa have to travel to visit all the world's children (say, under 11-years-old) in a 24-hour period?

THE following was first published in America's Spy magazine: There are 2 billion children in the world. But since Santa doesn't (appear to) handle Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists, that reduces the workload to 15 per cent — 378 million. At an average rate of 3.5 children per household, that's 91.8 million homes.

Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to different time zones and the rotation of the Earth, assuming he travels east to west. If each of the stops were evenly distributed across the globe, Santa would need to travel 0.78 miles per household — a total trip of 75.5 million miles. This means that his sleigh would need to move at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. By comparison, a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour. — *Blanaid McKinney, Macduff, Aberdeenshire.*

GIVEN that he would have to go up and down chimneys and place presents in stockings, he would have to travel at the speed of light, or beyond. This would have two important implications. First, at the speed of light, Santa's mass would become infinite and therefore occupy the whole universe, so that he could be everywhere at the same time (although we all might get slightly squashed). Second, he would travel back in time and so he could catch up with past Christmases too. — *John Kut, London*

THEY say something will cost the earth. If I were a wealthy alien, how much could I expect to be invoiced if I were to purchase it?

WHATEVER the cost of the Earth, the cost of the Moon will be considerably less. Our alien friend should first consider buying the Moon, since it is actually purchasable. The legal "owner" of the Moon is the United States — the USSR had to obtain permission from the US to land there. As no one has yet found an economically viable use for the Moon, I am sure that the US would settle for a couple of billion dollars and visitation rights. Our alien could then hold the Moon to ransom, with surrender of the Earth as payment. And because the destruction of the Moon would have catastrophic effects on life on Earth, payment would be swift. The alien would therefore have made a vast saving, and be the proud owner of not one but two heavenly bodies. — *Kristopher McGowan, Canton, Cardiff*

Any answers?

THE Government has banned beef on the bone although there is a greater danger from being struck by lightning. Would it not therefore be safer to make the public wear lightning conductors? What other legislation could be brought in to safeguard the public at better odds? — *A J Spooner, Caton, Lancashire*

I HAVE heard comedians claim that there are only 11 jokes in the world. What are they? — *Rob Froud, Wedmore, Somerset*

IS IT better to be intelligent or well-educated? — *Mariusz Czapla, Kopaszewo, Poland*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Shaping the harmonies of our time

Sir Michael Tippett

FOR a long time, Sir Michael Tippett, who has died aged 93, languished under the shadow of Benjamin Britten. Britten, eight years his junior, was a musical prodigy, lauded in his teens, widely appreciated after the success of his opera Peter Grimes in 1934, and remaining prolific and popular up to his death in 1976. By contrast, Tippett, a late developer, was a slow, deliberate composer who won acceptance gradually. International fame came only in his late 60s.

What distinguished the rest of his career was a prolonged Indian summer: for Tippett continued to write major new pieces until almost 90, breaking new ground with each one. Blessed with physical, creative and intellectual vitality, he became an almost legendary figure on the musical scene. His oratorio, A Child Of Our Time (1939-41) — a moving assertion of humanitarianism in an epoch of catastrophe — acquired eventually the status of an icon.



Seer and dreamer . . . Tippett combined social concern with a Jungian mysticism PHOTO: NEIL LIBBERT

Throughout his long life, Tippett ran against the grain of received British opinion. He early concluded that music and the arts were fundamentally international, and rejected (as did Britten) the then prevalent mode of nationalist folk-music-based composition championed by Vaughan Williams.

Tippett was a pluralist: a humanist who eschewed dogma; a socialist and pacifist; a Jungian who felt art was basically collective and archetypal; a visionary with a capacity to blend the most disparate ingredients — Beethoven, pre-classical counterpoint, jazz and gamelan music — within a single work, be it his exuberant First Piano Sonata (1936) or his bitter-sweet Triple Concerto (1979). Thus, his largest-scale compositions — notably, the five operas and three major choral works — were all attempts at creative synthesis at different points in his career. Prefiguring these summatory pieces, or developing out of them, were Tippett's four symphonies, five string quartets, five piano sonatas, concertos, songs and numerous shorter instrumental and choral works. Taken as a whole, however, this *oeuvre* had a consistent and distinctively modern stamp.

Tippett wrote little that could be called "experimental". His friend and mentor, T S Eliot, said that for him, as a poet, "the words come last"; likewise, with Tippett the notes came last, following upon a lengthy period of gestation and structural planning. His sense of the line and shape of a piece was such that in his maturity he invariably wrote from beginning to end in sequence, sending each completed section to his publishers, confident that there would be no need for significant revisions.

Tippett stood aside from trends and fashions. As a student, he was overpowered by the humanistic idealism of Beethoven's music; and he took structural models from Beethoven's compositions throughout his career. A second strand in Tippett's musical make-up derived from his early discovery of polyphonic music, especially Elizabethan madrigals.

Although unsympathetic to nationalism, Tippett delighted in all kinds of vernacular music, often using it to enrich his own style. The folksongs of his early (unpublished) ballad operas were later put to good use in his tongue-in-cheek Suite For The Birthday Of Prince Charles (1948); in his fifth opera, New Year (1985-88), he embraced the sonorities and rhythms of rap and reggae. His early encounter with jazz and blues, above all, convinced him that music retained a universal expressive potential, even if tinged with irony.

Tippett was born in London and grew up in Suffolk. His intellectuality was nurtured in early childhood by his highly articulate, well-read parents, who found incomprehensible his determination to become a composer. Having persuaded them to support him at the Royal College of Music, however, Tippett came to London in the summer of 1923. But he lacked the fluency and versatility of his fellow-students and his teachers, who included Malcolm Sargent and Adrian Boult, often despaired.

Tippett got his degree at the second attempt and then left London for the country to have peace to compose. This became a rule thereafter, despite the public appearances and jet-setting of later years.

As a student, Tippett accepted his homosexual leanings, but few of his close relationships survived his ruthless creative obsession: one of the longest lasting, with painter Karl Hawker, ended with a contrived separation and the latter's suicide.

Tippett's personal turmoil coincided with the rise of Nazism and Stalinism. Following Jung, he interpreted the violence of the period and the war that followed as projections of one society's "shadow" on to another: a view he held to, later, in the context of the cold war. Tippett identified strongly with those made scapegoats by intolerance and self-righteousness. That was the inspiration underlying his oratorio, A Child Of Our Time, which had begun as an opera about the Easter Uprising in Ireland, but gelled as a protest against the 1938 Kristallnacht.

Aiming for directness and lucidity in A Child of Our Time, Tippett took Handel's Messiah and Bach's Passions as his main models. Clinching the emotional impact of the work at five key stages, he incorporated negro spirituals (replacing the Lutheran chorales Bach would have used). This proved a brilliant ploy, helping to give the work great expressive breadth.

At its premiere in 1944, A Child of Our Time was understood primarily as a response to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. But its message — summed up in the final ensemble in characteristically Jungian language: "I would know my shadow and my light/So shall I at last be whole" — suits all situations where intolerance has thrown up victims and outcasts. A Child Of Our Time was the first work of Tippett's to be heard outside the UK: now it is constantly performed worldwide.

After the war, Tippett's priority was his first opera, The Midsummer Marriage, which absorbed his energies from 1946-52. When the opera was premiered at Covent Garden in 1955, audiences and critics, though baffled by his libretto, were bowled over by the score's lyrical ardour and radiance.

The main gibes against Tippett's operas have always been directed at

He was a visionary with a capacity to blend Beethoven, jazz and gamelan music within a single work

his libretti — quirky, magpie-ish mixtures of references and quotations (emulating The Waste Land) — despite the composer's insistence that they were meant not to be read as "literature", but as "gestures for music".

It was a brilliant production by Sam Wanamaker at the 1962 Coventry Festival of Tippett's second opera, the epic-style King Priam, that began to turn the tide in Tippett's favour, though its abrasive Brechtian dramaturgy and mosaic orchestration initially disconcerted those won over by the lyrical effulgence of The Midsummer Marriage.

In the mid-1960s, Tippett inherited the Bath Festival from Yehudi Menuhin, saved it from bankruptcy and widened its scope and audience appeal. Honours began to flow in: a CBE in 1959, and knighthood in 1966; he was made a Companion of Honour in 1979 and received the Order of Merit in 1984.

Tippett's first visit to the United States in 1965 as composer-in-residence at the Aspen Festival was a turning-point. He fell in love with the landscapes of the Far West and identified with the polyglot culture of the cities. America also took to Tippett in a big way. American commissions followed: the Fourth Symphony (1977) and Byzantium (1989) were premiered by Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony; The Mask Of Time was premiered by Colin Davis in Boston; and Boston, with the Toronto and London symphony orchestras, jointly commissioned The Rose Lake (1993), while Houston Opera, Glyndebourne and the BBC, commissioned New Year.

Tippett's "discovery" of what he called "a Newfoundland of the spirit" in America, also permeated his music from the mid-1960s onwards. Immediately, his third opera, The Knot Garden (1970), uncovered a new toughness and irony in his music, its harmonic character bluesy, its orchestration coloured by electric guitar sonorities. The scores and libretti of The Ice Break (1977) and New Year went even further. All three operas are explicitly about people of today, grappling with contemporary problems.

Tippett was a mixture of seer and dreamer. Both are encountered in the two great choral compositions of his maturity, The Vision Of St Augustine (1966) and The Mask Of Time (1983). The former brings to the fore Tippett's fascination with concepts of time — above all, with the possibility that art is detached from the everyday clock-time.

The Mask Of Time, in 10 movements, was a musician's answer to the scientific account of the development of civilisation in Jacob Bronowski's celebrated BBC film series, The Ascent Of Man (1973). An awesome conception, it depicts, in broad chronological leaps, the evolution of the universe and mankind's constant defiance of destructive forces ending with a wordless song of survival and hope.

Tippett's integrity as an artist and his humanitarian commitment made him one of the most esteemed figures in present-day culture. His absence from the musical scene leaves behind not only an artistic vacuum but a moral and spiritual one as well.

Meirion Bowen

Michael Kemp Tippett, composer, born January 2, 1905; died January 8, 1998

A talent to amuse

John Wells

JOHN WELLS, who has died from cancer at the age of 61, was an extraordinary chameleon figure: comedian, actor, translator, journalist, pseudo-diarist and even, on occasions, novelist and dramatist.

I first encountered him at Oxford when he was appearing in Gordon Crosse's musical version of An Italian Straw Hat and stopped the show with some protracted business over a recalcitrant collar-stud: I gave him one of the few unequivocal rave notices I've ever written.

Wells was a hard man to pin down: he seemed to pop up everywhere. But on two occasions he turned the Private Eye diaries he co-wrote with Richard Ingrams into highly successful stage-shows. In Mrs Wilson's Diary the supposedly suburban, Wincarnis-sipping Prime Minister's wife turned into a stoic heroine. Something similar happened with Anyone For Denis? seen at the Whitehall theatre in 1981 and based on the alleged correspondence between Denis Thatcher and Bill Deedes.

Wells so thought himself into the character's Blimpish outlook as to make him, if not admirable, at least comically consistent. At one point he memorably admonished Mrs T with: "You come in with a rock-solid mandate to club the bloody unions back into the Stone Age, and who do you



Wells: mask of impish wit

wheel out the moment it comes to any kind of confrontation, but pinko Prior, who is, in my humble opinion, about as much use as a one-legged man at an arse-kicking party."

Wells was an enigmatic figure: he enjoyed having one foot in the Establishment while leaving the other free to boot it up the rump. He initially acquired fame as a telly-satirist largely through his lethal impersonation of Selwyn Lloyd. But I suspect he prided himself more on his work as a writer, particularly his 1970s adaptation of Gulliver's Travels and, more recently, his well-received book on the House of Lords. Behind the mask of impish wit lay a serious man passionate about literature, history and the best of European thought.

Michael Billington

John Campbell Wells, writer, actor and director, born November 17, 1936; died January 11, 1998

Politics falls into Brechtian generation gap

THEATRE
Denis Staunton

THIS year is the centenary of the birth of Bertolt Brecht, a fact that will escape the notice of few Germans. A massive new edition of his works has appeared, a television channel is broadcasting a different Brecht play each evening, and the Berliner Ensemble will be performing its founder's work non-stop throughout the year.

The Brecht family has fallen out with the Berliner Ensemble amid mutual accusations during negotiations over performance rights. So Brecht's granddaughter, Johanna Schall, has moved around the corner to Berlin's Deutsches Theater to stage her first contribution to the centenary year, a rarely performed, early version of In the Jungle of the Cities.

Brecht initially wrote this text in 1922, and revised it thoroughly five years later. Set in the Chicago underworld, it portrays the struggle between Schlink, a rich Malayan timber merchant, and Garga, an impoverished assistant in a bookshop.

Brecht began the later version of the play with an appeal to the audience not to waste their time thinking about the motives behind the struggle but to judge the skill of the protagonists impartially.

Schall's production begins instead with an urgent voice-over summarising the plot as if it were a crime thriller. When the curtain goes up, we appear to be in traditional Brecht territory, complete with the familiar, white half-curtain.

But this second curtain is drawn back to reveal an elaborate, revolving set, dominated by a fallen, bronze giant, reminiscent both of Gulliver and of the hundreds of images of Lenin that now lie abandoned throughout Eastern Europe.

During the subsequent three and a half hours, actors clamber all over the giant, a car drives through the wall of a house, and the world's funkiest Salvation Army band wanders in and out to punctuate the action with songs.

Dominique Horwitz is magnificent as Schlink, an outsider who engages in a struggle with Garga in order to become close to him. Goetz Schubert's Garga is a wide-eyed idealist who adapts swiftly to the role of the realist which is forced upon him.

But in choosing an early version of the play, Schall has sacrificed much of the political force which Brecht added later, when he made the element of class struggle clearer.

Brecht aficionados will doubtless relish the opportunity to view this curiosity on a large stage, but in view of the restrictions the Brecht estate places on other directors, it is difficult to miss the irony of the playwright's granddaughter exhuming a text he rejected.

Michael Billington writes: Dario Fo, the Nobel Prize-winning Italian playwright, brings out the best and worst in British companies — you get pungent farce or slapdash pantomime. An ill-judged revival of his 1981 political comedy **Klaxons, Trumpets and Raspberries**, by a young group called Juggling Fiends, falls heavily into the latter category and is unlikely to win Fo new friends.

You could argue the play itself has dated. Its starting point was the kidnapping of politician Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in 1978. Out of that Fo creates a farcical fantasy in which the boss of Fiat, Gianni Agnelli, is rescued from a blazing car by one of his own militant employees, Antonio Berardi.

But when plastic surgeons get to work on the disfigured Agnelli, hospitalised wearing Antonio's jacket, they facially reconstruct him on the lines of his activist assembly-line worker. The stage is thus set for a political comedy of errors.

THE PLAY obviously depends on topical circumstance. But it still has political relevance: Fo makes the point, quoting Marx, that "the laws of a state are written on its bank notes" and that the heads of giant multinationals enjoy a power that transcends that of mere prime ministers. In an age when politicians go cap in hand to global media tycoons, Fo's point strikes me as pretty pertinent. And on the purely mechanical level, he makes good use of the mistaken identity gag with Antonio, assumed to be the disfigured Agnelli, at one point being force-fed minced stew through his nostrils.

But everything in this production, at London's Gate Theatre, goes off at half-cock. For a start Jonathan Dryden Taylor's new translation retains the Italian background of political kidnapping while working in references to Tony Blair, Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone and downsizing, which means that the action seems to be taking place in some temporal and geographical hybrid. And, although I realise Juggling Fiends may be strapped for cash, it is pointless to do the play with only four actors. The basic joke, by which one actor plays the two key roles, is instantly killed when everyone is rushing in and out in a mixture of disguises.

It is sad to damn a young company. But all they really prove is that farce is a form that demands the highest professional skill and that Fo needs to be played with the skill and precision of Molière. What we get here is a lunging, amateurish wildness that evokes the Edinburgh Fringe on a bad night.

A bloodless coup

CINEMA
Richard Williams

WHEN Wim Wenders points to the change in the nature of violence in the mainstream cinema, he is stating the obvious. Many Hollywood films currently on release contain sights that would have been unthinkable 10 years ago, and they appear to have been included as if by quota. Wenders says he made The End of Violence to get us thinking about this. And he has done a clever thing by making a film that uses the same language as the films that his film is about.

Wenders's effort, his first to be made in America since 1984, has the look, the feel and the faces of a Hollywood film. What it does not have, he insists, is a message. Maybe he fears that such a suggestion would put off the customers who might be attracted by the presence of Bill Pullman, Andie MacDowell and Gabriel Byrne. Maybe he doesn't have a message, anyway.

Reduced to the essential outline of Nicholas Klein's screenplay, The End Of Violence is about a secret government plan to cover Los Angeles with surveillance cameras in an attempt to eradicate violent crime. Mike Max (Pullman), a maker of exploitation movies, receives a secret FBI file on the project via e-mail. The anonymous source turns out to be Ray Bering (Byrne), a computer scientist employed to set up the system from a base in the Griffith Park Observatory, above Hollywood. Mike is abducted by two contract killers, but escapes and goes into hiding. The subsequent action interweaves several plot-strands, including the relationships between Ray and his boss (Daniel Benzali), between Mike's disaffected wife (MacDowell) and a rapper (K Todd Freeman), and between a stuntwoman (Traci Lind) and a young movie-obsessed detective (Loren Dean) who is trying to solve the mystery of Mike's disappearance.

Mike and Ray never meet, but Pullman and Byrne create the film's tension, playing variations on the theme weary watchfulness. MacDowell's air of half-suffocated glamour suits an unsympathetic role, and Lind, who has the healthy voluptuousness of the young Kim Basinger, makes a strong impression.

Two hours gives Wenders enough time to take us down various LA by-ways — to a stand-up poetry club, a film producer's mansion, the home of a gang of Mexican gardeners, and a movie set where Edward Hopper's famous Nighthawks is being brought to life, down to the tiniest detail. The film's internal rhythms are complicated, but its unhurried pace is seductive.

There are moments of satire, even self-satire, as in Udo Kier's wicked portrayal of a hack émigré director ("Why I do make films in America? I should have stayed in Europe!" — which gets a laugh from those who have followed Wenders' career). And there is a cinephile's affection in the appearance of the dying Samuel Fuller as Byrne's dad, and the use of Griffith Park, where Nicholas Ray, another of Wenders' father-figures, set much of Rebel Without A Cause.

The film's violence happens off-screen, in the old-fashioned way. Two minor characters, a pair of hitmen, have their heads blown off. We see them beforehand, in a comic argument about getting their job done (one of them is the wonderful Pruitt Taylor-Vince), and we see them afterwards, as shrouded corpses. That'll do nicely.

Distance is also among the film's themes. Someone once wrote an essay on how Wenders' vision of America was framed by the windscreen of a car. Times have changed, and now Wenders watches America from the seat of a helicopter, through the restless lens of a remote-control surveillance camera. Time and again the camera creeps over the top of a hill to reveal the grid of enigmatically identical streets. "Quite a city," one man says to another as they look down. "Nothing like it," the other replies. "If you could see it," the first man says. The hill is shrouded in fog.

Beauty under stress . . . Andie MacDowell in The End of Violence

On a winter's day in a small Fife fishing village, a mother and her newly-widowed daughter are trying to work out the unresolved tensions of their relationship. Outside, the daughter's teenage son is encountering a girl with whom he might soon discover sex. In the bus shelter, two old ladies are scanning the Deaths column in the local paper, looking for a promising funeral. And on the frozen beach a pair of 10-year-old truants are mooching about, picking up debris and worrying about penis size. Alan Rickman's The Winter Guest, adapted from Sharman Macdonald's stage play, moves gracefully between these four duets, linked by nothing much more than the weather.

Death, the guest in question, has cut the moorings of Frances (Emma Thompson), a photographer whose portraits of her husband line the walls of her cottage. As her mother Elspeth (Phyllida Law) struggles with the consequences, they alternate between bickering and tenderness.

Films like this, inconclusive depictions of scenes from ordinary life, with a quiet undertow of tragedy and comedy, don't often get made in Britain. It's not hard to imagine Rickman admiring Téchiné and Bergman. But The Winter Guest is also funny enough, at times, to suggest a Samuel Beckett script rewritten by Alan Bennett. "She'll be remembered," one of the old ladies says, perusing an obituary. "Aye," her companion responds. "I last saw her in Skinner's, eating a chocolate meringue." Meanwhile one of the little boys is convincing the other that rubbing his genitals with Deep Heat will do the trick.

The fact that Law and Thompson are cast in their real-life relationship has given the film its best publicity, and in the end they provide the strongest reason for seeing it. There's one extraordinary exchange which seems to say something about the transaction between mothers and daughters. Elspeth is wearing a fur coat. Frances takes the collar in her hands and rubs her mother's lined cheeks with remembered tenderness. "More, more," Elspeth says, closing her eyes, as their roles dissolve.

The film's problems concern its undistinguished look — compare and contrast Atom Egoyan's equally frost-bound The Sweet Hereafter — and a sticky residue of theatrical artifice, most obvious in the boys' longer speeches, which are simply unbelievable.

Lynne Stopkewich's Kissed, which goes on national release after its debut at the London Film Festival, is a gentle, sensitive portrayal of a girl who discovers in childhood that she is attracted to dead things — sparrows and hamsters, to start with — before going on to find sexual fulfilment with human corpses.

The luminous quality of the Canadian actress Molly Parker goes a long way to making Stopkewich's case, which is that some people can only achieve the transcendence of sex by overstepping what society in general believes to be the acceptable norms. Peter Outerbridge, as her fascinated boyfriend, and Jay Brazeau, the creepy undertaker who teaches her the rudiments of embalming, provide excellent support.

Stopkewich is careful about what she shows, and skilful enough to make us feel sympathy, even something stronger, for the girl. But I can't get beyond the fact that, whichever way you slice it, screwing dead people is wrong. And if it were me, I think I'd want to be asked first.

A happy childhood recalled in anguish

Nicci Gerrard

True to Both My Selves
by Katrin FitzHerbert
Virago 299pp £16.99

MOST people have one life. They know themselves only in a single context and they do not have to confront their alternative self — the person that they might have become, in a different kind of world. This is their moral luck. Katrin FitzHerbert had two lives, a double and contradictory history. This is her curse and her blessing, for she has had to grapple with uneasy notions of identity that most of us can complacently take for granted. She has had to decide who she is and who she wants to be. History, for her, has not been a river bearing her along, but a flood tide, pulling her apart in its cross-currents.

The two selves of the title are the schoolgirl from the West Country, in her gymslip and plaits, and the devoted daughter of a Nazi officer in Germany — monstrous Daddy's eager little girl. While the English Katrine Norris learned to hide her German roots and her tainted past, the German Katrin Theile longed for her secure and happy childhood and yearned for her brave and loving Papa.

It is this tug between the two versions of herself — one acceptable and the other, apparently, not — that informs FitzHerbert's book. It must have taken a great deal of courage to write and demands imaginative thoughtfulness from its readers.

Katrin Thiele was born in 1936, in Germany. Both her mother and grandmother were English; both in their turn had married German men and both had lived through the first world war in London, suffering from the wave of Germanophobia that had swept through the country. Katrin's father, Eberhard Thiele, was a forceful man, fiercely committed to the family and the Nazi party. Her mother was a tender-hearted pragmatist. Katrin's childhood in Germany — even through the war and its bombings and evacuations — was a time of security and happiness. The bombs that fell made craters for her and her friends to play in; the spotlights that criss-crossed the horizon at night were lovely to watch. Her father was often absent, but absence makes the heart grow fonder, and when he returned he would make steam trains, beautiful doll's houses; he would take his darling daughter on his knee.

While her brother Udo revolted against the patriarchal Eberhard and his beloved Nazi party, Katrin adored her Papa and embraced his doctrines of duty, loyalty and conformity. She felt — for the only time in her life — that she belonged. She dressed in the uniform of the party, wore a swastika on her lapel, admired Hitler, whose picture hung in the living room. She was just a little girl. Is it possible for a little girl to be a Nazi? FitzHerbert thinks it is.

When the war ended and her father fled, Katrin and her mother, brother and grandparents returned (separately and with considerable difficulty) to England. Ten-year-old Katrin Thiele became Katrine Norris. She was told never to mention the fact that she was German. Her mother divorced her father and eventually remarried. Her grandparents were delighted to be in England again and spoke slightingly of their old country and all its customs. They became quite English, sloughing off all signs of otherness. Even with each other, and even with themselves, the family learned to erase their past and forget about Eberhard Theile, Wehrmacht officer, fallen patriarch, villain. Except Katrin. She didn't forget him and nor did she learn to hate him.

Like the simple German language of her childhood, her feelings for Daddy were stuck at the infantile stage. She had no complicated vocabulary for her feelings, and she could not integrate her innocent love with what she was gradually learning. She saw pictures of the Holocaust, heard more and then still horribly more about the atrocities committed by people like her father, perhaps by her father himself. But how could she reconcile that with her memories of happiness and safety?

Eberhard Thiele emigrated to Canada with his new wife. He and Katrin never managed to talk about the past and he seemed to have no desire to look back to that old self, the upright Nazi officer who, maybe, sent many people to their deaths. He died in 1979. Only in 1992 did she start to research her family history.

She does not say why suddenly, in her 50s, she found the courage to look at the facts to try to understand them. She started to read books and watch films about the Holocaust. She rooted around in archives, tracing her own family, bearing witness to the courage of her mother and grandmother, and searching through testimonies for mention of her father. She tried to find her personal history in the murderous history of the war. So, in her middle age, she became a real adult: compromised, bewildered, guilty, honest at last about what had made her into the person she is today.

FitzHerbert's early life was extraordinary, perhaps too extraordinary for her plain pen. Yet though her style can be awkward, unable to plumb the depths of the history she lived through, she never slides away from her saving honesty. She was a little girl born in war, living through family guilt and denial. She became a woman who, unlike so many of her peers, learned to look at her life and name it. And it is easier to understand your own suffering than to know your own complicity and shame.

A good companion

Peter Porter

Priestley
by Judith Cook
Bloomsbury 314pp £22.50

THE archetypes of the human imagination seem to derive equally from supreme masters and from literary journeymen. So we owe Hamlet and Don Quixote, the essential prevaricator and the mad fantasist, to Shakespeare and Cervantes; Robinson Crusoe, the castaway, and Frankenstein, the Promethean, to middle-ranking talents, Defoe and Mary Shelley; and finally the Count of Monte Christo, the obsessional avenger, and Sherlock Holmes, the omnipotent investigator, to the populists Alexander Dumas *père* and Conan Doyle. It is a salutary reminder that in public life ideas will always be independent of literary excellence.

It is also particularly relevant to the life and work of J B Priestley. In An Inspector Calls, Priestley delineated, in the shape of a popular West End play, one of the prime concepts which permeates Western consciousness — that behind respectability lurk black secrets of exploitation and self-deception. Such ideas affect us more when they are embodied in popular images.

Throughout his long and productive career — at least 100 books and published scripts, and countless pieces of journalism — Priestley had a unique ability to take the pulse of the public. He was generally denied the admiration and sometimes even the recognition of philosophers, novelists (a "tradesman writer" — Virginia Woolf) and critics, yet it would be hard to think of a literary man whose work was more widely read and responded to. You do not need to be an admirer of his talent to recognise its public prominence.

I was surprised, while reading Judith Cook's biography, to discover that I had read so many of his books — and I am a very unprogrammatic reader. Not just the large-scale and famous novels — The Good Companions, Angel Pavement — but slighter ones, like Bright Day and The Magicians. Then there are the collections of essays: oddities such as The Balconinny as well as Delight and Margin Released. Most pervasive in my memory is the almost unceasing river of Priestley's journalistic commentary which I recall from the New Statesman and other journals in the fifties and sixties.

Here, too, Priestley had a genius for defining public moods and for coining terminology. Perhaps these coinages have faded now, but just to read once more his diatribe against ADMASS is to be taken back to a time when polemic was more generous and public-spirited than it is today. Among his other activities *pro bono publico*, Priestley founded the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

It is true that some of his *idées fixes* have not worn well. His concern for ideas about time, its circularity, laminations and transcendence, as expounded by J W Dunne, Ouspensky and others, is worthwhile only because it led to his writing Dangerous Corner, I Have Been Here Before and Time And The Conways. The titles of these plays point to Priestley's talent for summing-up, for cutting the difficulty out of present-day human preoccupations.

Despite his lack of success on the stage in post-war years, he continues to be an important playwright, and the theatre to be the arena where his skill works best. His sympathies even crossed the barriers of genre and brow-level. Johnson Over Jordan shares a form of Expressionism (Priestley repudiated the term) with the plays Auden and Isherwood wrote for Rupert Doone's Group Theatre, though he could always be assured of abuse in Grigson's New Verse. His great friend, Hugh Walpole, a High Tory, congratulated Auden in the famous double number of New Verse in 1937, a piece of hypocrisy Priestley would never have been guilty of. Priestley never sucked up to an avant-garde: his left sympathies were always popular ones.

Priestley . . . ability to take the pulse of the public PHOTO: JANE BOWN

Judith Cook's biography is straightforward to a fault, and poorly proof-read and indexed. Priestley and Shaw are pictured together: the date is given as 1961, 11 years after Shaw's death. Cook treats his life and its difficulties — his infidelities and lack of warmth to his children — with understanding, and she tries to carry out an impossible task, summarising his numerous publications.

Her best pages are those dealing with his appalling experience in the trenches. She quotes John Braine's opinion that Priestley's millions and millions of words were written "so he wouldn't remember the 1914-1918 war". For this reader, at least, her presentation of Priestley brought back a great slice of his past life, together with hopes and illusions from that time. Reading Bees On The Boatdeck in 1948, I resolved to be a playwright. But Priestley can be exonerated: I didn't make it.

Paperbacks

Desmond Christy

This Time: Our Constitutional Revolution, by Anthony Barnett (Vintage, £6.99)

WHAT will the Queen make of 1997? Annus horribilis 2? For Anthony Barnett it was a year of hope. Even the scenes of mourning for Princess Diana showed that the crowds were mindful. "Their letters, messages and applause, which carried official UK before it, demonstrated that the country is ready for full democracy, British style: informal, good-humoured, inventive and measured." You can't do much against optimism on this scale — except enjoy it while it lasts. And to think we almost lost him. In 1988 he was just about to emigrate. Then Charter 88 happened. Constitutional reform — better than a suntan any day.

The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy, by Howard Zinn (Seven Stories Press, £12.99)

"*EXCEPT* enjoy it while it lasts"! Howard Zinn would hate such a pessimistic remark. He is a radical historian — radical in his actions as well as his thinking — who writes about the people (blacks, women, strikers, prisoners, anarchists, Vietnamese peasants) and issues that American "democracy" would rather forget. His dismissal of pessimism and defeatism in the face of those with the guns and the money is "not simply a matter of faith, but of historical evidence. Not overwhelming evidence, just enough to give hope, because for hope we don't need certainty, only possibility. Which (despite all those confident statements that 'history shows . . .' and 'history proves . . .') is all history can offer us."

Deutschland, A Winter's Tale, by Heinrich Heine, ed T J Reed (Angel Books, £7.95)

A FINE translation (alongside the original German) of Heine's satirical epic. After years of exile, Heine turned his brilliant wit on the bourgeoisie that sustained the political oppression that kept him out of his homeland.

Stone Junction, by Jim Dodge, int. Thomas Pynchon (Rebel Inc., £7.99)

WHO cares what reviewers think when you have Pynchon on side? He says reading Stone Junction "is like being at a non-stop party in celebration of everything that matters". A tale of modern-day outlaws caught up in a world of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy, helped along by some mind-bending pharmaceuticals. Hey, don't smoke it all at once.



Martin Sheen in Apocalypse Now: 'the most ambitious of all versions of Conrad' PHOTOGRAPH: KOBAL

Apocalypse now and then

Adam Mars-Jones

Conrad on Film
Edited by Gene M Moore
Cambridge 262pp £40

THIS book's title phrase, Conrad on Film, can mean two things — the novelist's stated opinion of what was then a fledgling medium, or the body of work made up of adaptations of his fiction. The two meanings are starkly opposed: Conrad is quoted here as referring to the cinema as "absolutely the lowest form of entertainment", yet the list of Conrad adaptations numbers 86.

If Conrad's early assessment of cinema as an art form was unflattering, then it didn't stop him from pocketing the easy money that came from film rights (a bounty which in 1919 made possible the suitably flashy purchase of a Cadillac). Nor did mild contempt prevent him from writing his own film script, Gaspar The Strong Man, never filmed, a version of his story "Gaspar Ruiz". By 1923 he was lecturing, while on an American tour, on "Author and Cinematograph", and describing "moving-pictures" as "miraculous", even if they couldn't show, "except in a superficial way, what the characters are thinking".

Orson Welles, who had intended his first film to be a version of Heart Of Darkness and not Citizen Kane, felt that there was a special affinity in this case between a writer and a medium not primarily verbal ("I don't suppose there's any novelist except Conrad who can be put directly on screen").

Robert Spadoni in his essay suggests that Welles's plans for Heart Of Darkness, which he had already adapted for radio in 1938 (a version lasting only half an hour), essentially involved imposing the conventions of sound broadcasting on the experience of cinema.

The contributors to the volume comment on individual films, some famous and some obscure, but they can't help addressing the general question of literary adaptation. Everyone seems agreed that fidelity is a virtue, but there are different orders of fidelity: they tend to come into conflict. Conrad used exotic settings in a number of works, and it is precisely those works and those settings that have attracted film-makers, but the result on screen tends to be a confused smear of local colour. Conrad could be selective and impressionistic about details, but the camera is obliged to deal in specifics. Carol Reed's Outcast Of The Islands, starring Trevor Howard, scores highly for its transposition of Conradian ironies in one essay, only to be berated in another for its doomed attempt to make Ceylon look like Borneo.

Hitchcock's Sabotage, his 1936 version of The Secret Agent, stands up remarkably well to two sorts of ideological scrutiny, Avrom Fleishman's being class-based and Lissa Schneider's feminist. Schneider's starting point is the film's American title of The Woman Alone: she usefully explores the idea that the film addresses male and female audiences simultaneously, by combining elements of both the thriller and the "woman's picture".

Neither critic does justice to the effectiveness of the sequence of the boy Stevie unknowingly carrying the terrorist's bomb, a textbook demonstration of suspense filmmaking which then breaks all the rules by ending with a meaningless death. The sequence makes its impact precisely because the story has seemed to be governed by a more escapist set of conventions then the novel, until the director makes the cold mechanism of his technique stand in for the various traps that ensnare the story's more innocent characters. It's Hitchcock's most nihilistic game with his audience before Psycho.

A novel and a screenplay drawn from it are likely to share some elements — specifically dialogue — yet they are perhaps at their furthest from each other when they seem to overlap. It may seem undeniable that a faithful adaptation should reproduce a significant fraction of the dialogue in the original, but the editor points out in his introduction that in fact Conrad's dialogue "often tends toward melodrama when stripped of a narrator's ironic commentary".

Words on the page, moreover, contain all possible readings of them, while an actor must make a choice. Kurtz's last words in Heart Of Darkness become breathy, guttural, self-loathing and guilt-ridden, as spoken by Orson Welles on radio, while Marlon Brando in Apocalypse Now whispers, and John Malkovich in Roeg's 1994 version speaks them almost meditatively.

Some of the essayists gathered here prefer other formulas to "adaptation": Tadeusz Miczka, writing on Andrzej Wajda's film of The Shadow Line, stresses the completeness of the transformation required by the change of mediums when he refers to "intersemiotic translation". Colin Tucker, producer of the 1992 BBC Secret Agent (acclaimed here by Ted Billy), disclaims any idea that a novel can be reduced to an essence. An adaptation has the status instead of a "parallel event".

As Professor Fleishman remarks, theorists of adaptation tend to recognise three categories, although they label them differently. He gives some sample trinities: transposition, commentary and analogy (Geoffrey Wagner, 1975), literal, critical and original adaptations (Klein and Parker, 1981), borrowing, intersecting and transforming versions (Andrew, 1984).

SUCH categories imply a hierarchy of ambition that is often contradicted by results. The BBC Secret Agent was a loving and intelligent transposition, with the incongruous brightness of Barrington Pheloung's music taking on the function of ironical narration in the novel. Hitchcock's Sabotage takes more liberties, adding a love interest and a happy ending — yet it is the moments of bitterness and disorientation that remain in the memory. Apocalypse Now is infinitely the most ambitious of all versions of Conrad (though the novelist's name does not appear in the credits), but it is also preposterously overblown and unaffecting.

Professor Fleishman is an academic and writes academic prose, but he also has an impatience with mystification that is distinctly endearing in this context. Having discussed the prevalence in critical literature of threefold breakdowns of the business of adaptation, he proposes his own set of categories, to be based "on a successful formula used in other industries".

His suggested technical terms are Small, Medium and Large.

Frost among equals

William Fiennes

Homage to Robert Frost
by Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott
Faber 117pp £7.99

ROBERT FROST'S image is still a caricature, all frost-white hair and New England farmyards, the author of comforting poems that show you how to fork hay or mend a wall or climb a birch tree till it bends. He is still the avuncular all-American emblem Joseph Brodsky describes as "a folksy, crusty, wisecracking old gentleman farmer". It was a persona Frost worked hard to construct. When he told one of his interviewers, "I am an ordinary man, I guess," that "I guess" was itself the Exhibit A of his ordinariness.

This "ordinary man" went on diplomatic missions to Britain and Russia for the US State Department. He recited a poem at John F Kennedy's inauguration. In 1943, 50,000 copies of "Come In" were distributed to American troops stationed overseas in order to boost morale. In this sense he was not a rustic but a Renaissance man.

He was far from "folksy". Seamus Heaney calls him "demonically intelligent". You cannot read "Out, Out" — with its description of a young boy losing his hand to the jump of a saw and then dying — and still consider this poet "comforting". Heaney speaks of his "negative recognitions". Frost himself admitted that he was "one acquainted with the night"; that he could scare himself with his own "desert places".

The three essays that make up Homage To Robert Frost celebrate this darkness and intelligence. But Joseph Brodsky's close reading of "Come In" is an early reminder that even the winners of the biggest prizes are fallible. It doesn't take a Nobel laureate to hear in Frost's dark wood an echo of the *selva oscura* with which Dante opened The Divine Comedy, nor to suggest that "Come In" is more than just a nature poem. Brodsky's declaration — "Because of a greater cultural heritage, a greater set of references, it usually takes much longer for a Briton to set a poem in motion" — is as wrong-headed as it is vague.

Brodsky's essay begins to take flight when it turns to "Home Burial", one of the blank-verse narrative poems from Frost's second book, North Of Boston (1914). The poem depicts a farmer and his wife standing on a staircase. She's at the top of the stairs, looking out onto the cemetery where her husband had buried their child. Brodsky proceeds line by line, working through the poem with a forensic rigour. He brings out the theatricality of the setting, the staircase suggesting "a hierarchy of significances". He brings into focus the "ballet" of the couple's small movements on the stairs; he draws you in to the poem's hinterland of "grief and reason".

All three of these essayists are in thrall to Frost's technical accomplishment. Seamus Heaney suggests that the opening lines of "Desert Places" are "full of the hurry and slant of driven snow, its unstoppable, anxiety-inducing forward rush, all that whispering turmoil of blizzard". These essays are full of such subjective, non-empirical observations, the sort of thing that would be considered an aberration in academic criticism. But Heaney's perceptions have a crisp, persuasive grace; the stars that appear at the end of "Desert Places" possess "the cold tingle of infinity".

Derek Walcott is the least Frostian of the three essayists: his poems' sequinning of classical invocations is just the sort of showiness to which Frost was genetically resistant. And Walcott's is the least focused of the three essays, the closest to a survey. He likes the grand, sweeping claim: "A certain deadening of the ear had dated dramatic verse since the Victorians, who tried to resuscitate Elizabethan and Jacobean drama through the pentameter, prolonging a hollow, martial echo that could not render the ordinary and domestic . . ." Without examples, without showing us just what he means in Tennyson, in John Clare and Christina Rossetti; that's not an argument, just an opinion.

But Walcott can articulate what in most readers would remain mere apprehensions; the "vernacular elation" of Frost's tone, "the springing resilience of his verses". His criticism flares and branches into metaphor: "Fall approaches, and with fall, the poetry of Frost, not so much in full flare like the harlequinade of Stevens, but early and late fall, the line or branch of the verse with tentative colours, then the words dropping naturally off the lines into a heap at the base of the poem's column . . ."

The essays are linked by common themes. Brodsky, Heaney and Walcott are all convinced that there is more to the apparent plainness of Frost's language than meets the eye or inner ear. To hear these poets speak of pentameter, anapaest, enjambment and caesura is to hear the argot of craftsmen, no more or less than the terms of the trade: bevel, joist, dovetail. And all three of these essays raise the question of the relevance of biography to the analysis or enjoyment of art. "Would you like to meet Mr Frost?" Brodsky asks: "Then read his poems, nothing else." When Walcott encounters racist remarks in Frost's letters, he does not want their ugliness to tarnish the poems: "One groans or shudders, but one pushes on. Poetry is its own realm and does not pardon."



Frost: 'An ordinary man, I guess'

Homage To Robert Frost makes you hungry for that realm: the essays send you rushing back to "Birches", "Home Burial" and "A Silken Tent". What this amounts to is a little book with a big ambition: to move our concentration back from the lives of poets to the poems themselves, knowing that it was the poems that made the poets remarkable in the first place.



Rugby Union Tetley Bitter Cup fourth round: Bath 24 London Scottish 23

Scots want ear-biter banned

Robert Kitson

LONDON Scottish are demanding that the Bath player who bit their flanker Simon Fenn during last Saturday's Tetley's Bitter Cup tie is identified, banned for a minimum of 12 months and made to pay compensation both to them and to Fenn.

Fenn, a 26-year-old from Sydney making his first-team debut for Scottish, returned to the field after the incident with his head bandaged but had to have 25 stitches inserted into the lower part of his left ear after the game. He is expected to need plastic surgery.

London Scottish, who on Monday pointed the finger at Bath's all-international front row of Kevin Yates, Federico Mendez and Victor Ubogu, said in a statement: "We are disappointed that no Bath player has yet been willing to admit responsibility for the incident.

"Simon Fenn must reserve his position until the extent of damage to his ear is fully determined. Simon's main concern for a rapid recovery is the risk of infection due to the injury being caused by a bite. We understand that Bath are seeking to complete their own internal inquiry as soon as possible, and hopefully find the player responsible and prepare the appropriate punishment.

"We would expect a lengthy ban or suspension for a minimum of 12 months, with financial compensation both to the club and player."

Bath's chief executive Tony Swift responded: "We will carry out an investigation into an alleged incident during the game, but I am not making any further comment."

On the field, Bath's cup pedigree remains intact but, European finalists or not, they sit unloved in the doghouse this week. Moreover the bite which disfigured the action-packed tie diverted attention from another mongrel of a performance, rescued in injury-time by a penalty from Jon Callard.

Bath's coach Andy Robinson will be leaving for Bordeaux soon, where the Heineken Cup final against Brive will be played on January 31, but he may not have time to take in the local scenery. It took him two hours to compose himself to talk to reporters after the game.

"London Scottish deserved to win the game," he growled grim-faced. "I'll read every paper and I hope you're honest about it. Slagging off the players is not what I'm about but I'll make sure that we sort ourselves out."

Disciplinary matters aside — and Scottish's Mick Watson was also fortunate to stay on after an early yellow card and a high tackle on the wing Mike Kayson — there now seem to be dangerous cracks in the social cement that used to bind Bath together.

Scottish, sharper in the loose and superior in the line-out, led 7-0 early on and by 10-8 at half-time despite an impressive score by the pacy Kayson, who has played gridiron for Great Britain Colts.

Callard, embroiled in a running feud with Watson, concentrated on the job in hand enough to convert Richard Webster's 51st-minute try and add a penalty and a drop-goal to put Bath 21-13 up.

Rhodri Davies and Derrick Lee then released Colin Morley for a thrilling sprint to the right corner, converted by Lee, and with less than four minutes left Bath were offside 25 metres out in front of their own posts. With Lee flat on his back, the Sydney-born Ian McAusland, tipped for an imminent Scotland A call-up, stepped up and drilled it left-footed for a 23-21 lead.

Injury-time — there were to be 17 minutes in total — had begun when McAusland, this time deep in his own 22, failed to find touch with his clearance. The old pro Callard promptly went down like a stone under a naive charge by the Scottish wing Conan Sharman but jumped up to kick the winning penalty.

Adedayo Adebayo and Mike Catt both suffered bruised kidneys after blows to the back, and Adebayo was later found to be passing blood.

Carling . . . retirement

Carling times exit to stop another ruck

Robert Armstrong

WILL CARLING's announcement of his retirement last week was accompanied with predictable good wishes from Harlequins, but the club may be relieved that the former England captain's exit has prevented another damaging power-struggle at The Stoop.

It was no secret that Carling sought preferential treatment from Harlequins' director of rugby Andy Keast. That would have undermined Keast's authority among the other players just as the authority of Keast's predecessor Dick Best was challenged, forcing the former England coach out of the club at the end of last season.

In his capacity as England captain Carling was heavily involved in selection and the choice of tactics, yet he invariably played a more modest role with Harlequins, for whom he usually managed only 12 to 15 games a season during 10 years at the club.

Matters came to a head with Keast when Carling expected to remain in the first team despite missing training. Their relationship was further soured by Carling's dissatisfaction over tactics, especially when he was substituted during the recent win over London Irish.

Harlequins, having dropped him from the first team last month, were unwilling to lend Carling to a Premiership rival, and the prospect of dropping down to the lower divisions held scant appeal for a player who led England to three Grand Slams. The likelihood of Carling fulfilling his contract once his broken hand had mended were limited, given the breakdown occurred between player and coach.

The centre, who captained his country 59 times, said: "Retirement from the game is a big wrench but it's the right decision for me."

His club Harlequins said: "We are saddened but not surprised by Will's decision to retire. His has been a brilliant career at the highest level and he has been a wonderful servant both to rugby and to Harlequins."

Though the 32-year-old is only halfway through his three-year contract, Harlequins have agreed to grant him a testimonial which could earn him another £100,000.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

No quarter given

LIVERPOOL, Middlesbrough and Chelsea all left it a bit late before winning their quarter-final rounds in the Coca-Cola Cup. After 90 minutes of largely disappointing goalless action against Newcastle United at St James' Park, Liverpool strikers Michael Owen and Robbie Fowler popped up to grab a goal each in the first half of extra-time.

Owen struck in the 95th minute when he collected a pass from Fowler and sent a chip over the Newcastle goalkeeper Shaka Hislop. A slick strike by Fowler sent the ball into the net seven minutes later.

Liverpool's opponents in the two-leg semi-final will be Middlesbrough. The Teesside club, relegated from the Premiership last year but currently second in the First Division table, went through to the semi-finals by beating struggling Reading 1-0, also from the First Division, with a controversial goal from Craig Hignett three minutes into injury time.

There was a lot of confusion in the centre circle after Middlesbrough were awarded a free-kick before Neil Maddison briskly swept the ball forward to Paul Merson and, with the Reading defence undermanned and caught on the back foot, Hignett walloped the ball into the Reading net.

Goalkeeper Ed de Goey was Chelsea's hero as his side survived a scare against First Division Ipswich Town. He saved two spot-kicks to seal victory for the Blues, who won 4-1 on penalties. Ruud Gullit's team struck twice before half-time and appeared to be cruising towards victory when Ipswich's Argentine star Mauricio Taricco and Alex Mathie hit back to take the match into extra time.

In the other semi-final, Chelsea will take on Arsenal. When the two sides meet later this month, the clash of the London giants will bring together footballing talent worth nearly $100 million.

Arsenal reached the last four by defeating West Ham 2-1 — their ninth semi-final in this competition. Ian Wright, back in the side after a two-match suspension, fired the Gunners ahead in the 25th minute and Marc Overmars doubled the lead shortly after the half-time whistle, but Samassi Abou came off the West Ham bench to give his side a glimmer of hope for the last 15 minutes. However, a stubborn Arsenal defence, inspired by Martin Keown, managed to hold out.



Lara . . . in the hot seat

BRIAN LARA has been appointed as captain to lead West Indies against England and out of the wilderness of a major slump in form which resulted in the side's recent 3-0 Test whitewash in Pakistan. "It's a great honour, but it's a very tricky seat to be in at this moment in West Indies cricket," said Lara, who replaces Courtney Walsh.

JEREMY GUSCOTT is back in the England Rugby Union squad which starts its training sessions at Bisham Abbey later this week in preparation for the Five Nations Championship. The 32-year-old Bath star has not played for the past six months after breaking his arm on the British Lions tour of South Africa in July. Northampton's Tim Rodber is also back along with Mike Catt, but Chris Sheasby and Tim Stimpson have been omitted from the line-up. The full squad is: Perry, Rees, Healey, Greenwood, Guscott, Catt, De Glanville, Grayson, Dawson, Bracken, Leonard, Garforth, Yates, Rowntree, Cockerill, Regan, Johnson, Archer, Grewcock, Dallaglio, Rodber, Hill, Diprose, Back.

THE WORLD of cricket was shocked by the death of David Bairstow, the former England and Yorkshire wicketkeeper, who was found hanged at his home. Bairstow's body was discovered by his wife, Janet, and two children, Jonathan, aged eight and seven-year-old Rebecca. The cricketer, aged 46, who retired from the first-class game in 1991, had suffered a recent series of personal setbacks.

ANATOLY KARPOV retained his Fide chess world title by beating Vishy Anand 5-3 at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. The 46-year-old Muscovite missed several chances to defeat the Indian No 1 in classical play but won both speed-chess tie-break games. Karpov picked up nearly $.1.4 million for his moves while loser Anand received half that amount. At Hastings, Kent, 14-year-old Rosalind Kieran became the new women's world amateur champion.

FINA, world swimming's governing body, is to set up of a task force of independent experts in medical science, medical research and forensics to investigate doping in the sport. It follows the discovery of drugs in the luggage of Chinese swimmer Yuan Yuan when she arrived in Australia to take part in the world championships at Perth. The swimmer and her coach have been expelled from the championships by the Chinese and face minimum four-year bans from the sport.

THE 1,270-mile Sydney to Auckland stage of yachting's Whitbread Race was won by Grant Dalton's Merit Cup. Dennis Conner's Toshiba came second. In another development, Pete Goss of Britain, named Yachtsman of the Year last week, is to build a catamaran 115ft long and 60ft wide in a $3.5 million bid to celebrate the millennium with the quickest circumnavigation of the world.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP:
Arsenal 2, Leeds 1; Aston Villa 1, Leicester 1; Bolton 0, Southampton 0; Chelsea 3, Coventry 1; Crystal Palace 1, Everton 3; Derby County 3, Blackburn 1; Liverpool 2, Wimbledon 0; Manchester Utd 2, Tottenham 0; Sheff Wed 2, Newcastle 1; West Ham 6, Barnsley 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Manchester Utd (played 22, points 49); 2, Chelsea (22-42); 3, Blackburn (22-41).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE:
Division One: Charlton 3, Middlesbro 0; Crewe 2, Swindon 0; Huddersfld 5, Oxford 1; Ipswich 0, QPR 0; Nottm For 2, Port Vale 1; Portsmth 0, Man City 3; Reading 1, Bury 1; Stockport 1, Bradford 2; Stoke 0, Birminghm 7; Sunderlnd 4, Sheff Utd 2; Wolves 5, Norwich 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Nottm Forest (26-54); 2, Middlesbrough (26-51); 3, Charlton (26-47).

Division Two: Bournemth 3, Northmptn 0; Brentford 2, Millwall 1; Bristol City 4, Grimsby 1; Burnley 2, Watford 0; Carlisle 5, Southend 0; Luton 3, Blackpool 0; Plymouth 1, Bristol R 2; Preston 1, Gillingham 3; Walsall 3, Chesterfld 2; Wrexham 0, Fulham 3; Wycombe 1, Wigan 2; York 0, Oldham 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Bristol City (26-55); 2, Watford (26-55); 3, Bristol Rovers (26-40).

Division Three: Barnet 0, Rotherham 0; Brighton 0, Swansea 1; Cambridge 2, Scarboro 3; Cardiff 1, Leyton O 0; Darlington 4, Colchester 2; Doncaster 1, Shrewsbry 0; Hartlepool 1, Exeter 1; Hull 0, Mansfield 0; Lincoln 1, Chester 3; Rochdale 1, Notts Co 2; Sc'thorpe 1, Peterboro 3; Torquay 2, Macclesfld 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Notts County (26-53); 2, Peterborough (26-46); 3, Scarborough (26-43).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division: Dundee U 1, Kilmarnk 1; Hibernian 1, Dunfrmline 0; Motherwell 1, Celtic 1; Rangers 2, Aberdeen 0; St Johnstone 2, Hearts 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (21-45); 2, Hearts (21-44); 3, Celtic (21-42).

First Division One: Ayr 2, Dundee 5; Falkirk 6, Hamilton 1; Morton 0, Airdrie 2; Partick 1, Stirling A 3; Raith 4, St Mirren 1. **Leadings positions:** 1, Dundee (21-42); 2, Falkirk (21-39); 3, Raith (21-35).

Division Two: Brechin 0, Clydebank 1; East Fife 1, Forfar 0; Livingston P, Inverness CT P. **Leading positions:** 1, Clydebank (19-38); 2, Livingston (18-33); 3, Queen of the South (18-27).

Division Three: Albion 3, Montrose 2; Alloa 1, Berwick 3; Arbroath 2, Queens Pk 2; Dumbarton 1, Cowdnbth 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Arbroath (20-39); 2, Alloa (19-36); 3, Ross County (19-34).

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP:
Second Round: E Stirling 1, Edinburgh C 1; Stenhsmr 4, Deveronvale 0; Stranraer 2, Fraserburgh 1.

Football Premiership: Derby County 3 Blackburn Rovers 1

Derby victory is bonus for Man Utd

Michael Walker

PLAYING at home while performing like an away team is not a trick for which even a managerial magician such as Jim Smith is renowned. But Smith somehow conjured it from Derby County last Sunday.

Blackburn Rovers dictated the match from the start but by the final whistle two fortuitous goals from Dean Sturridge and a third from Paulo Wanchope amid some poor defending three minutes from time ensured that Derby plucked three points from the hat that lifted them into sixth place above Leeds United and towards a Uefa Cup spot.

Rovers, for whom Chris Sutton scored his 14th of the season to raise his side's spirits just before Derby's third, remain a point behind Chelsea and there is no denying the greatest beneficiaries of this result — Manchester United, who maintained the seven-point lead at the top they secured by beating Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford a day earlier.

Roy Hodgson was more concerned about Blackburn's defensive failings than the title race. "While hope exists we will continue to live in hope but we committed two bad errors and we didn't take our chances today," the manager said. "I don't think we played badly but we got beaten. These things happen in football."

From the beginning Blackburn looked the brighter side, and Mart Poom in the Derby goal produced two alert saves in the opening five minutes. Only 90 seconds had elapsed when Kevin Gallacher and Sutton combined to slice Derby open and Poom did well to stand his ground and parry Gallacher's shot around a post.

Touch of magic . . . Flowers is helpless as Wanchope fires in Derby's third goal PHOTO: SHAUN BOTTERILL

Then, after Sutton had flicked on a Damien Duff free-kick, Poom again impressed in ushering away Colin Hendry's header. For a team with three centre-backs of the stature of Igor Stimac, Dean Yates and Steve Elliott, Derby were looking remarkably meek.

This set something of a pattern for the whole game, although one important change ultimately altered the outcome in Derby's favour. Smith and his assistant Steve McClaren should take credit, as it was their verbal intervention, haranguing each and every one in a white shirt after barely 10 minutes, which brought a switch in attitude. Suddenly the Rams stopped playing like sheep and, crucially, started winning tackles.

Given possession, it is no secret that Francesco Baiano, Wanchope and Sturridge can create havoc, and duly Derby moved forward with the slick cohesion that is their trademark under Smith. They were two up before the half-time whistle.

Nevertheless, Blackburn were hardly shredded in the process and, if there was an element of offside about Derby's first, there was a definite deflection on the second. Both goals had a common characteristic in that they came from indecisive Rovers clearances.

Jonathan Hunt won a crucial header after Stephane Henchoz could knock the ball only 10 yards outside the Blackburn area. When the ball came down from Hunt's head Wanchope swung a deceptive leg at it and in so doing left the Rovers defence bamboozled and square. Sturridge ran on to the ball from what looked to be an offside position and walloped it mercilessly past Tim Flowers with 15 minutes gone.

Blackburn resumed their territorial domination but four minutes before the interval another poor piece of defending, this time by Gary Croft, gifted the ball to Baiano. The Italian wasted no time in supplying Sturridge but Flowers would surely have saved his shot had not Hendry's head diverted the ball inside the near post.

The script was much the same in the second half, with Garry Flitcroft putting in two useful shots, the second acrobatically palmed to safety by Poom, Sutton having a muscular header blocked and Henchoz providing one of the misses of the season after 64 minutes when, unmarked, he volleyed over from six yards.

A goal then and 2-2 would have been a likely final score. Instead Rovers had to wait until four minutes from the end, when Flitcroft delivered a delicate pass to end an unseemly scramble from a corner. Sutton met it with a powerful header that even Poom could not get near.

Even with so little time remaining the Blackburn fans must have hoped for an equaliser, but instead they had to suffer Derby's third. Wanchope had produced one of his sporadically intelligent afternoons that so frustrate his manager but, when an awkward ball began bouncing in the Rovers penalty area, he had the unique skills necessary to control it, nudge it and then volley it in. Just like that.

Tennis Qatar Open

Double blow to British hopes

Richard Jago in Doha

GREG RUSEDSKI and Tim Henman found themselves in Australia a day earlier than expected after quarter-final defeats here at the weekend.

Henman began his first defence of an ATP Tour title at the Sydney International on Tuesday, a difficult test of how quickly he can recover from a long flight, while Rusedski, in order to get the fastest serve in the world going, was happy to escape a Qatar so cold that it seemed the earth must have tilted on its axis.

Both are capable of making their mark in next week's Australian Open, despite Rusedski's disappointing 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 exit to the uniquely creative Fabrice Santoro, and Henman's narrow defeat by 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 to the silken brilliance of Petr Korda. The results saw Henman slip two places to 19 in the world rankings, overtaken by Mark Philippoussis and Albert Costa, but Rusedski remains at No 6.

Rusedski was unhappy with his volleying but more telling was the absence of thunderbolt serves in any of his matches. This may have been because of the wind, or as insurance against injury, or even as an aid to concentrating on earlier forward movement and a better pause on impact with his first volley. If so, that may be wise.

Equally sensible was his decision to play an exhibition event in Melbourne which will guarantee him three matches of preparation. He has nothing to lose because he has no ranking points to defend.

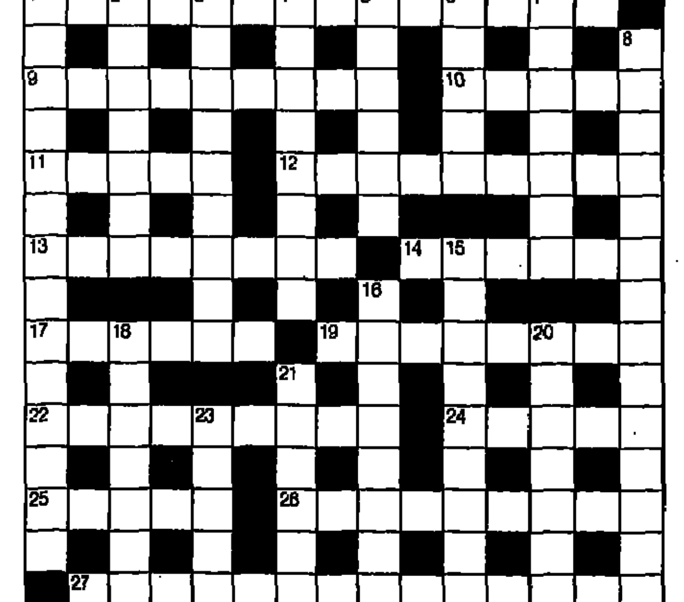
Henman's court coverage has been faster and more resilient, and his forehand appears to have greater margin of error without greater caution. He has also been working on more safety through spin with his second serve, which he admits he still needs to improve. "I think the problem is mental more than technical," said Henman.

The sinewy Korda, who complained he felt the cold more than other players because he "lacked the body fat", nevertheless fattened his wallet by $137,000 and captured his ninth title by overwhelming Santoro 6-0, 6-3 in the final last Sunday.

Korda's wonderful performance was a reminder that in the evening of his career, and only one week short of the Australian Open, he is a genuine Grand Slam contender again.

● Lleyton Hewitt, a 16-year-old Australian standing at No 550 on the world list, became the lowest-ranked player to win an ATP tournament when he defeated Jason Stoltenberg 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 in the final of the Australian men's hard court championship in Adelaide. Hewitt, who had eliminated Andre Agassi in the semi-finals, will move up to around No 200 in the next list.

Cryptic crossword by Taupi



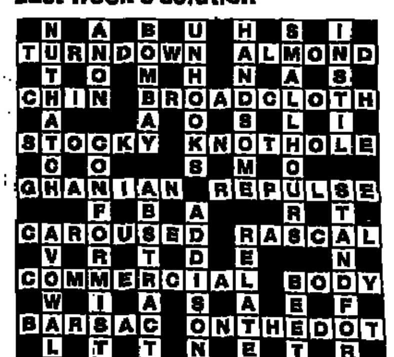
Across

1 What's not on fire if burnt — odd phenomenon (9,5)
9 Careless about information on fire without copy of it (9)
10 Visitor's supposed to be heard (5)
11 Part of a day to note (5)
12 Legwear and shirt, say, for one in the diamond field (5-4)
13 Alienate sergeant's orderly (8)
14 Having 8 leaves zero tax on business returns (6)
17 Their way lacks energy and desire (6)
19 Reportedly declines bed panelling (8)
22 Latin hero's peculiarly brave one (9)
24 One held by the female pirate (5)
25 Stand seating delay (5)
26 It's about protecting flooring and footwear (9)
27 Survey fool in revivalist movement (14)

Down

1 Amusing facts about chaps number one that's very orthodox (14)
2 Vermin coats grow wild growth (7)
3 Fishy product's clearly bottled (9)
4 Nags to be trained for this? (8)
5 It turned up in 12's fancy (6)
6 True blue? (5)
7 I retain composure and passivity (7)
8 Not true flight no longer conforms? (5,3,2,4)
15 Carved patches on monuments (9)
16 Players desert one for singers (8)
18 Cut off to get a losing streak back (7)
20 Learn about elevator in place of bridge (7)
21 Fruit with stems attached (6)
23 Place of misery and old greeting (5)

Last week's solution



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